Out of sight: surrealism and photography in 1930s Japan

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OUT OF SIGHT:
SURREALISM AND PHOTOGRAPHY
IN 1930s JAPAN

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DECLARATION

This thesis is submitted to the Centre for Research and Education in Art and Media CREAM at the School of Media, Arts & Design, University of Westminster, in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is entirely the author's own work, except where noted, and has not been previously submitted for this or any other awards.

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Abstract

> There is not a country in the world where the Surrealist voice found a faster response than Japan. From its origin (1924, date of the first Manifesto), until the war, there was no Surrealist activity in Europe that was not almost immediately reflected upon.[1]

Regardless of André Breton's insistence on how there was *no* Surrealist activity that did not have a response in Japan, the knowledge of Surrealist photography practised in the country during the decade between 1930 and 1940 remains 'out of sight' of the existing scholarship until the present day. Therefore, this thesis brings to the fore the significance of this practice, encircled by the multifaceted relations between Surrealism, photography and 1930s Japan, asking how can its historical condition be altered and written into the existing field of knowledge.

Emerging and developing at a time of political oppression and military campaigning that led Japan into the Pacific War in 1941, Surrealist photography of this decade is an important case study into how photography can perform a critical role in visualising new and different strands of thought and action. As this photography was practised outside of a single Surrealist group, it played such a role by equally remaining 'out of sight' of the state censorship and maintaining a position in the marginalised space of the illustrated press.

Such a position outside of a formal Surrealist group and on the margins of Japanese society is affirmed in this thesis through the notion of minor literature, characteristic for its deterritorialised, collective and immanently political character. These three defining characteristics enable construction of a minor historical framework through which Surrealist photography in Japan of the 1930s can be considered as of significant relevance to the discursive fields of Surrealism and History of Japanese Art.

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[1] Breton, André ([1959] 2008). En guise de préface à l'anthologie surréaliste de Tokyo. In: Breton, André; Hubert, Étienne-Alain (et al.), *Ouvres completes IV: Écrits sur l'art et autres textes*. Paris: Gallimard, p. 1155.

To argue for such relevance, this thesis is based on archival research of over a hundred photographs and offers a close reading of the main texts published with regard to Surrealist photography in the decade. It shows how regardless of its unorthodox position, Surrealist photography in 1930s Japan mobilised an extensive number of practitioners around the country, in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka, and how they acted as a subversive force to the homogenised visual culture from within all the major categories of photographic practice developing in the decade.

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A significant part of the primary sources was initially accessed at the British Museum in London. I would like to thank the staff members of the British Museum Asia Study Room who have assisted my research of the Museum's collection of the 'Pre-War Japanese Photobooks and Magazines'. I would also like to thank Dr John Carpenter, who supported the development of this thesis in its early stage during my MA course in History of Art with SOAS. I am

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Note on the use of Japanese language

For the use of Japanese language in this thesis I have applied the modified Hepburn system of romanisation, recommended by the British Standard BS 4812: 1972. This use includes the macarons, or long vowels, indicated in all cases except when the word has entered the common use in English language, such as Tokyo (unlike Tōkyō). I have referred to Japanese names in their standard format in Japanese, with the last name followed by the first name. In the footnotes and the bibliography, a distinction was made to indicate when a Japanese author was referenced in Japanese language by omitting the comma following the last name. Also, when in the source material the name of a Japanese author was romanised in English differently, such romanisation was maintained. For example, Takeba Jō (last name first name) is quoted from a source in Japanese whereas Takeba, Joe (last name, first name, with a different romanisation in the original source) is quoted from a source in English.

All translations in this thesis are my own, except where indicated otherwise. I have referred to the titles of photographs in their English translation and have provided romanisation of the original reading the first time when it appears in the text. For example, *Wind* (*Kaze*) indicates that the title of the photograph has been translated in English as *Wind* from Japanese *Kaze*. I have referred to English translations of photographs in cases where they have been made available in the source material. I have also referred to English translation for titles of quoted articles, with romanisation of their original reading indicated in the adequate footnote. However, for the sake of consistency when referencing the primary sources, I have referred to the titles of the magazine volumes in their original reading, providing translation the first time when they appear in the text. For example, the *Foto Taimusu* (*Photo Times*) indicates that the romanised title of the magazine reads in Japanese as the *Foto Taimusu* and that the translation in English reads as the *Photo Times*. Finally, I have provided translations of the titles of sources accessed in Japanese. When such translation was already indicated in the title of the volume, I have used

italics to point out that the translation was not mine. For example: *Yasui Nakaji shashin-shū* [Yasui Nakaji, Collection of Photographs] is my own translation whereas *Yasui Nakaji shashin-shū* [*Yasui Nakaji, Photography Collection*] indicates that the publisher has suggested such an English translation. The University of Westminster has arranged for a sample of this thesis (Chapter 2) to be examined for the appropriate use of the original sources, romanisation and the format of referencing. I have adopted the changes suggested in this examination and have indicated where stylistic changes to translations have been suggested by the examiner.

A number of words in Japanese have been adopted from foreign languages. In Japanese, loanwords are always indicated by a phonetic system of transliteration known as *katakana* and they sometimes differ depending on the author. For example, 'Surrealism' could be referred to both as *shūrurearizumu* as well as *shūrurearisumu* in a loanword but it would also receive a translation into Japanese as *chōgenjitsushugi*. I have referred to different uses of the same word in romanisation of the Japanese titles of photographs, articles and the source literature as per the original text. Also, as the acquisition of a word in Japanese language is not necessarily accompanied by exactly the same application, I explain in the thesis such cases that are important to the argument. For example, in the case of 'plastic' photography (referred to as *purashuchiku* in a loanword or as *zōkei* in translation), I contextualise the use of the word as suggested by the authors whose texts I refer to. I have referred to the Gregorian calendar for development of the arguments in this thesis. When the Japanese Imperial system has been indicated in the source material I have maintained such a reference. For example, Taishō era would indicate the time of the reign of the Emperor Taishō (1912-1926) and Shōwa era would indicated the time of the reign of the Emperor Shōwa (1926-1989).

Introduction

Any project setting out to condense Surrealism into a singular entity would very soon prove futile. Constant changes in character, focus and structure since its conception within the Parisian avant-garde of the 1920s condition its position beyond such confinement. It remains essentially a 'living movement' primarily grounded in literature and visual arts but aimed at nothing less than the revolutionising of the mind.[1] Nevertheless, in order to identify a set of key points that would offer the possibility of examining in which form and to what extent Surrealism existed in Japan during the 1930s, a brief trajectory of some of the crucial changes in how Surrealism perceived itself and set its course of action through to the beginning of that decade becomes necessary.

These key points include its collective character, a clear political aspiration and an international structure, all of which can also be regarded as decisive conditions enframing the origin of a particular form of Surrealist photographic expression in Japan, emerging at the turn of the decade. As such, they can be seen as the basis upon which a minor history of the relationship between Surrealism, photography and 1930s Japan can emerge in an affirmative and inclusive manner.

[1] Breton, André ([1934] 1978). What is Surrealism?. In: Rosemont, Franaklin (ed.), *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*. New York: Monad: Distributed by Pathfinder Press, p.158 and p. 172.

Surrealism: Collectivity, political agency and internationalism

André Breton articulated a definition of Surrealism 'once and for all' in the *Manifesto of Surrealism* (*Manifeste du surréalisme*, 1924) in the following paragraph:

> Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought.[2]

The entry was founded on a belief that 'the greatest degree of freedom of thought' was still possible 'among all the many misfortunes to which we are heir'.[3] Breton understood the 'reign of logic' as limiting the possibility of experiencing the full potential of human nature and proposed a quest for a different space, 'a kind of absolute reality' or 'surreality' where such conflicts existing between rationality and freedom, the conscious and unconscious mind or waking and dreaming states could be resolved and where they could coexist on equal terms.[4] He thus proposed that Surrealism is a means for complete liberation and thus a revolution of the mind, strained by the boundaries of logic and convention. This revolution of the mind was to be achieved by 'psychic automatism in its pure state', a complete suspension of conscious control over its working. As a methodology aimed at opening the mind up to a different form of reality, one that acknowledges the space of dreams and aims at making it functional in the waking state, it was greatly indebted to Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, first published in Vienna in 1900.

Announcing a formal inauguration of Surrealism, the text was preceded by five years of collective activities of an early Surrealist group, including their attachment to Paris Dada, and it coincided with the publication of the first

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[2] For Surrealism as the 'living movement' see: Breton, André ([1924] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 26.
[3] Ibid, p. 4.
[4] Ibid, pp. 9-14.

Surrealist magazine *La Révolution surréaliste.* In 1928, Breton followed this text with *Surrealism and Painting* (*Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*), expanding Surrealism's field of interest into the domain of visual arts. The Surrealist image was situated within a definition offered by a French poet Pierre Reverdy, as the following:

> The image is a pure creation of the mind. It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities. The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be – the greater its emotional power and poetic reality.[5]

Such a definition of the Surrealist image, insisting on the intertwining between a perceived, outer reality and an unconscious, inner state of mind, also celebrated the Surrealists' admiration for another French poet Comte de Lautréamont. His phrase from *The Songs of Maldoror* (*Les chants de Maldoror*, 1868-1869) that described a 'fortuitous encounter upon a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella' formed a base for Surrealist aesthetics, grounded in the search for chance encounters that would set free any rational measure or code imposed on the mind.[6] Based on such poetic imagination, *Surrealism and Painting* established an anatomy of vision as equally concerned with that 'which is not visible' and grounded the problem of (Surrealist) perception in the fact that our eyes 'have to reflect that which, while not existing, is yet as intense as that which does exist'.[7] Hence, the things that are not known as material and within the established reality but rather exist in the domain of the imaginary, unconscious, unreal, immaterial, illusionary, dreamt and unknown were ascribed with an equal value in terms of their visual representation, as another means of opening up the space of 'surreality' to investigation and actualisation.

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[5] Breton, André ([1924] 1974), p. 20.
[6] For such interconnectedness between Breton's understanding of Reverdy's definition through the lens of Lautréamont's phrase see: Hubert, Renée Riese (1988). *Surrealism and the Book*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 189-191.
[7] Breton, André ([1928] 1972). *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: Harper and Row, pp. 1-5.

With this text, Surrealism had already established an elaborate critical grounding of its interests and managed to flourish from the domain of literary expression into the field of visual arts by the end of the 1920s. However, although Breton would provide its critical grounding, it was a group logic that drove Surrealist research and experimentation. Collective activity was a consistent and distinctive feature of Surrealism and was expressed in group experiences ranging from games to publications and exhibitions. As Krzysztof Fijalkowski defined it, it has been 'the *sine qua non* for the elaboration of a Surrealist thought and culture, in a real sense authenticating, guaranteeing and moulding their very possibility'.[8]

With a group of devoted supporters in France and the continual responses it initiated internationally, Surrealism was gaining a high acclaim during the decade, but was also subject to various criticisms and went through significant transformations. Most notably, these involved a number of attempts to establish links with the Communist Party under the latest course of the Surrealist action: that of political commitment. Frustration caused by an inability to establish an appropriate means of political action resulted in a split within the French group and the 'Aragon affair' of 1929, the same year that the first magazine ceased publication. These events formed a background for the publication of the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (*Second manifeste du surréalisme*) in 1929, a specific 'reminder of principles'.[9] A large part of this text was dedicated to discrediting most of the people who comprised Breton's immediate circle throughout the 1920s, such as Antonin Artaud, Philippe Soupault and André Masson but also Georges Bataille. However, it marked a point of significant change as proletarian revolution was recognised to be a necessary pre-condition to liberation of the mind.[10] The 'new' Surrealism entering the 1930s was determined by a course of 'total revolt', refreshed by

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[8] Fijalkowski, Krzysztof (2005). Invention, Imagination, Interpretation: Collective Activity in the Contemporary Czech and Slovak Surrealist Group. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 3, p. 4 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal3/acrobat_files/Fijalkowski.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013]. For how Surrealism is founded on the premise of '*collective* and *international* adventure' see: Rosemont, Franklin (ed.) (1978), p. 29.
[9] Nadeau, Maurice (1965). *The History of Surrealism*. New York: Macmillan, p. 164.
[10] Ibid, p. 153.

new members such as Salvador Dalí and re-focused on the problems of the Surrealist object.[11]

Within such a collective and politically engaged framework, what proceeded to be a defining characteristic of Surrealism in the decade following the *Second Manifesto* and preceding the outbreak of the Second World War was its internationalisation, informing Michel Remy's claim that 'Surrealism is international or it is not'.[12] Surrealist groups in various countries started forming concurrently with the one in France, and during the 1930s a number of efforts were made to tighten the links between them. Following an address given to accompany an exhibition of Surrealist works in Brussels, Breton travelled with much success to Czechoslovakia and the Canary Islands in 1934. These travels culminated in the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London in 1936 and resulted in the publication of four issues of the *Bulletin international du surréalisme* (1935-1936). The *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* exhibition that opened at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936 crowned the international output of Surrealism at that time.

The interaction between Surrealism and varied cultures around the world in its international context is considered to have been liberal. Michael Richardson has noted how Surrealism was unique among modern intellectual movements particularly because of its international appeal. He writes:

> Surrealism in different cultural contexts from the 1930s onwards did not simply emerge from French surrealism; it did not, that is, germinate from a single root. Far from being followers of André Breton, surrealists in places like Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Egypt and Japan sought to chart their own relation to surrealism in a way that while giving due recognition to Breton, never acknowledged deference towards his views.[13]

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[11] Breton, André ([1924] 1974), p.125.
[12] Remy, Michel (1986). British Surrealism: The Very Prehensile Tail of the Surrealist Comet. In: Del Renzio, Toni (et al.), *Surrealism in England: 1936 and After*. Kent: Kent County Council Education Committee, p. 4.
[13] Richardson, Michael (2005). Surrealism Faced with Cultural Difference. In: Mercer, Kobena (ed.), *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*. London: Institute of International Visual Arts; Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, pp. 73-74.

The relationship between Surrealism and different cultural climates was thus flexible but far from arbitrary. Breton kept a close eye on Surrealist activities around the globe as he was aware how 'the word found favour faster than the idea' and that this often resulted in misinterpretations of Surrealism's chief premises.[14] The fact that such an international 'front' of artists and intellectuals would have crystallised during the 1930s cannot be understood as anything but a clear political statement, formulated against the rising tide of Fascism and inability of the fragmented European nations to constitute any definitive opposition to its claims.[15] Considering the fact that Surrealism searched for the means to support its attempts to get closer to the Communist Party, its international character would have aimed to increase the chances of such integration. Also, it can be understood as support for Communists' call for a united international front that would oppose the global rise of capitalism.

Surrealism in Japan: Absence of a single group

At the time that Breton published the *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924, thirty year-old Nishiwaki Junzaburō was studying Old and Middle English Literature in Oxford, having just returned from his first visit to Paris. Two years later he will be appointed a lecturer in English literature at the Tokyo's Keio University, and will initiate the first literary Surrealist group in the country. The group consisted mostly of his students, one of whom was a poet Takiguchi Shūzō.[16] The 'Keio group', however, was not the only channel through which the meanings and significance of literary Surrealism were probed in Japan in the 1920s, which would have already found its way to the country via different

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[14] Breton makes this statement with regard to 'abstractivist' activities in Holland, Switzerland and England but is especially keen to stress that it was due to such circumstances that Jean Cocteau managed to appear in a Surrealist exhibition in the US and Surrealist magazines in Japan, as per: Breton, André ([1935] 1974), p. 257.

[15] Filipovic, Elena (2003). Surrealism in 1938: The Exhibition at War. In: Spiteri, Raymond and LaCoss, Donald (eds.), *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, p. 198.

[16] Hirata, Hosoe (1993). *The Poetry and Poetics of Nishiwaki Junzaburō: Modernism in Translation.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp. xxii-xxiv.

routes, and earlier in time.[17] The very word for Surrealism in Japanese, *chōgenjitsushugi*, appeared for the first time in 1925, and was coined by an anarchist poet Muramatsu Masatoshi, in an article 'Reality and Surreality' published in the May issue of the *Bungei Nihon* (*Literary Japan*).[18] With a number of translations of Surrealist poetry starting to appear in Japanese in the same year, 1925 is considered as an initial point of the movement's introduction to the country.[19] Nishiwaki and Takiguchi, together with a poet Kitasono Katsue and a painter Koga Harue are considered to have been at the forefront of the movement in the country.[20]

The Surrealist intentions of Japanese poets started appearing in Japanese literary magazines from 1927, with the first manifesto-like proclamation made in the same year by Kitasono, Ueda Toshio and Ueda Tamotsu in a magazine volume *Bara.majutsu.gakusetsu* (*Rose.Magic.Theory*).[21] The proclamation, entitled 'A Note, December 1927' and announcing their Surrealist baptism, was sent in an English translation to the members of the French group: Breton, Artaud, Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard.[22] In 1929, Nishiwaki published a comprehensive elaboration of Surrealist theory and made use of the Japanese term *chōgenjitsushugi* explicit in this context in 'Surrealist Poetic Theory'.[23] By 1930, a number of Surrealist literary and theoretical texts were already published in literary magazines such as the *Shi to Shiron* (*Poetry and Poetics*) or special magazine issues, such as the January 1930 volume of the

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[17] Ibid, pp. 143-144.
[18] Muramatsu Masatoshi ([1925] 2000). Genjitsushugi to chōgenjitsushugi [Reality and Surreality]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.)*, Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 1: Shūrurearisumu no shi to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 1: Surrealist Poetry and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 3-7.
[19] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.), *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, p.18.
[20] Sas, Miryam (1999). *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Surrealism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 10-11.
[21] Translation of this text is made available in Clark, John (1997). *Surrealism in Japan*. Clayton, VIC, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Japanese Studies Centre, p. 8. The original text is reprinted in Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990), p. 22.
[22] Hirata, Hosoe (1993), p. 141.
[23] Nishiwaki Junzaburō ([1929] 1999). Chōgenjitsushugi shiron [Surrealist Poetic Theory]. In: Wada Keiko (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 4: Nishiwaki Junzaburō, paionia no shigoto* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 4: Nishiwaki Junzaburō, the Work of a Pioneer]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 1-203.

Atelier, the first to be dedicated to Surrealist art.[24] However, simultaneously with the first translations and original publications, Surrealism encountered strong criticism. As much as the internationalisation of the movement remained grounded in the activities of the French group and reflected its political agenda, the possibility of its 'superficial misinterpretation' was expressed by an art historian Tanaka Yoshio, and reflected the concern that Surrealism in Japan might not have been much more than an echo of its European counterpart. [25] Doubts around its existence expressed during the decade included a comment by a Surrealist painter Fukuzawa Ichirō from 1937, in which he ascribed to the movement in Japan the quality of an 'exotic flower transplanted into a distant land', kept alive in a superficially constructed environment by not more than a handful of enthusiasts under the spell of a foreign culture.[26] Therefore, the contradiction noted by John Solt of how 'the movements in France and Japan, although called by the same name, had obvious differences from the outset' is immanent in the trajectory of Surrealism's existence in the country.[27]

A Futurist writer Kanbara Tai decreed Surrealism to have failed in the country as early as 1930.[28] His verdict was based on the facts that the Japanese were formulating their understanding of Surrealism on translations, and that Surrealists only consisted of a limited number of enthusiasts who only published in certain types of publications. The turn of the decade thus witnessed a similar division within the literary Surrealist circles in Japan to the split in the French group following the 'Aragon affair', resulting in the

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[24] These publications included the *Manifesto of Surrealism*, translated by Kitagawa Fuyuhiko and published in the *Shi to Shiron* in 1929. For the fact that these texts were also read by photographers around Japan see: Minami Hiroshi (1982). *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū: shisō, seikatsu, bunka* [Study of Japanese Modernism: Thought, Life, Culture]. Tokyo: Burēn Shuppan, p. 227. The key translations are available in Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha.

[25] Clark, John (1994). Abstract Subjectivity in the Taisho and early Showa Avant-Garde. In: Munroe, Alexandra (ed.), *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (Exh. Cat.). New York: H.N. Abrams, p. 44.

[26] Clark, John (1997), pp. 25-26.

[27] Solt, John (1999). *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: the Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katue (1902-1978)*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, p. 46.

[28] Nakamura Giichi (1982). *Nihon kindai bijutsu ronsōshi, Zoku* [History of Disputes in Japanese Modern Art, Continued]. Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, p. 197.

separation of the contributors to the *Shi to Shiron* and the founding of an independent publication *Shi: Genjitsu* (*Poetry: Reality*).[29] The split was initiated by different interpretations of poetic function, understood either as 'engaged poetry' (*poésie engagée*) or 'pure poetry' (*poésie pure*).[30] Two particular essays: Nishiwaki's text 'Surrealist Poetics' and Ueda Toshio's 'My Surrealism', both published in 1929 in the *Shi to Shiron* caused the reaction in Kanbara's 'The Fall of Surrealism' published in the *Shi: Genjitsu* in the following year.[31] Kanbara accused Japanese Surrealists of 'ignoring' and 'despising' reality, thus ultimately 'mistranslating' the purposes of Surrealism.[32] Nishiwaki's text aimed at formulating a Surrealist poetics as based on Reverdy's definition of the image's power in bringing together two distant realities. Ueda expressed a personal view of Surrealism claiming it as his own and made strong remarks of the following type:

> The world of reality is a world of death, and a world of sleep. You people who dream in this world of sleep! You do not exist. Living things, you deserve to be abhorred.[33]

The claim, evoking Breton's own views expressed in the *Second Manifesto*, finally provoked strong reaction from writers such as Kanbara, and their

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[29] For the comparison of the split to the French Surrealist group see: Linhartová, Vêra (1987). *Dada et Surréalisme au Japon*. Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, p. 172. See also: Sas, Miryam (1999), p. 55.

[30] For a more detailed discussion of the term 'poésie' see: Adamowicz, Elza (1998). *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 19.

[31] Ueda Toshio ([1929] 2000). Watashi no chōgenjitsushugi, Geijutsu no hōkō [My Surrealism, Directions in Art]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.)*, Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 1: Shūrurearisumu no shi to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 1: Surrealist Poetry and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 67-84. Nishiwaki Junzaburō ([1929] 2000). Chōgenjitsushugi no shiron, aru oboegaki to shite [Surrealist Poetics, in a Form of a Memorandum]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.)*, Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 1: Shūrurearisumu no shi to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 1: Surrealist Poetry and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 132-136. Kanbara Tai ([1930] 2000). Chōgenjitsushugi no botsuraku [The Fall of Surrealism]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.)*, Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 1: Shūrurearisumu no shi to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 1: Surrealist Poetry and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 198-213.

[32] I rely on interpretation of this discussion available in English, as per: Sas, Miryam (1999), pp. 56-57.

[33] I rely on a translation of this paragraph, as per: Ibid, p. 58.

separation from the *Shi to Shiron*.[34] The split, essentially taking place in terms of the understanding of what constitutes appropriate Surrealist action may be seen as one of the reasons behind the absence of a common ground that would enable collective Surrealist activity in Japan as a defining characteristic of Surrealism.[35]

The fact that there was no anchoring element or a single 'centre' to ground the existence of Surrealism in Japan can be considered its essential feature. It was by no means particular to this country within Surrealism's international orbit, with the well-known examples including at least Belgium and England.[36] The split in the domain of literary Surrealism, however, should be viewed as a symptom rather than a cause of the inability to form a single group. In effect, it resulted from the condition that any politically organised activity in Japan at the time was prohibited by the law. This fact, together with a gradual oppression of the freedom of thought should be understood as informing Ueda's remarks, and not his misinterpretation of the character of surreality. Enactment of the Public Peace Maintenance Law (*Chian ijihō*) in 1925 proclaimed any organised opposition to national policy illegal.[37] This enabled systematic suppression of the Communist Party, secretly established in 1922, and proletarian art groups from 1928 to 1934.[38] The governmental body in charge of pursuing any organised communist or anarchist organisation was The Special Higher Police (*Tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*), established in 1911 and

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[34] 'The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd', as per: Breton, André ([1929] 1974), p. 125.

[35] Richardson, Michael (2005). Drifting Objects of Dreams: The Collection of Shūzō Takiguchi, Satagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, 3 February – 10 April 2005 The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama, Japan, 28 May – 3 July 2005. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 4, p. 2 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal4/acrobat%20files/richardsonpdf.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013].

[36] For a similar situation taking place in Belgium see: Allmer, Patricia and Van Gelder, Hilde (eds.) (2007). *Collective Inventions: Surrealism in Belgium*. Leuven University Press, Leuven, p. 10. For Surrealism's existence in England in this context see: Rosemont, Franklin (ed.) (1978), pp. 440-446.

[37] Article 1 of the Law reads: 'Anyone who organizes a group for the purpose of changing the national polity (*kokutai*) or of denying the private property system, or anyone who knowingly participates in said group, shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding ten years. An offense not actually carried out shall also be subject to punishment', as per: Lu, David J. (1997). *Japan: A Documentary History*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, p. 397.

[38] McClain, James L. (2002). *Japan, a Modern History*. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., p. 390.

given more power in 1925. The late 1920s were marked by constant economic depression, political suppression of any form of activism and a number of political assaults, preparing the ground for occupation of Manchuria in 1931. In the immediate aftermath of the Law's enactment, the Japanese Communist Party itself split into two factions. Rather than following the orthodox Marxist ideology, a dissident group of writers opted for a closer association with the European avant-garde movements (including Surrealism) and formed the New Sensibilities School (*Shin Kankaku-ha*).[39] Assassination of the Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi in 1932 marked the end of democratic politics in the country, giving way to bureaucratic decision-making under the control of militarist authority in 1936.[40] After 1937, when Japan became involved in an undeclared war with China, meeting military demands was considered a matter of sole national priority, in both politics and the administration of economy.[41]

The Communist Left and the associated Proletarian Art movement were outlawed by 1934, with the surveillance extending to Surrealist practices. Surrealism in Japan was understood as a 'cultural mission' of Communism ever since the publication of Breton's *Second Manifesto*.[42] This is affirmed in a 1931 definition of Surrealism within an annual governmental report titled 'The Condition of Social Movements During the 16th Year of Shōwa', which reads:

> [Surrealism] aims to liberate the human mind by overcoming various inconsistencies in human psychology. It claims that the psychological phenomena cannot exist without a relation to the realms of material, that the psychological inconsistencies are reflections of inconsistencies of capitalist society and tyranny…and that the overcoming of the psychological inconsistencies must be conducted in tandem with the overcoming of socio-economic inconsistencies as proclaimed by Marx.[43]

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[39] Iida, Yumiko (2002). *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 32.
[40] Ibid, p. 31.
[41] Duus, Peter (2008). *Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 480.
[42] Clark, John (1994), p. 48.
[43] I rely on a translation of this paragraph, as per: Tezuka, Miwako (2005). *Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop): Avant-Garde Experiments in Japanese Art of the 1950s*. PhD thesis, Columbia University, pp. 122- 123.

As a challenge to the imperial power, Communism was systematically suppressed, together with any related organisations, by means of constant arrests in the 1920s, which became even more regular in the 1930s. The primary, if not the sole function of the Public Peace Maintenance Law was aimed at the suppression of Communist influence in the country.[44]

Conditioned by the shift of political climate in the later part of the 1920s, the absence of a single group resulted in a distinct idiosyncrasy of Japanese Surrealism. Although establishing itself as a part of Surrealism's international framework, it operated as a dispersed network formed by artists around the country and its political goals were never singularly and straightforwardly formulated. Such position reflected the fracturing of literary Surrealist groups in the second half of the 1920s but was also of key importance for how Surrealist painting and other visual arts such as photography came to hold mainly distanced and independent positions from each other. A Japanese critic Moriguchi Tari is known to have visited *Surrealist Painting* (*La Peinture surréaliste*), the first exhibition of Surrealist art in 1925, held at the Pierre Gallery in Paris, together with Fukuzawa. The exhibition showed works by nine painters, including Hans Arp, Giorgio De Chirico and Max Ernst, and was accompanied by a catalogue that was produced by Breton and Robert Desnos, including one reproduction of each artist's work. Moriguchi purchased the catalogue and used the reproductions in an article he published upon his return to Japan in 1928 but did not identify them as Surrealist and made no reference to Surrealism in the text.[45] However, Japanese painters interested in Surrealism would inform themselves by directly accessing Surrealist and art publications in French, as at least *La Révolution surréaliste* and *Cahiers d'art* were available in Japan since the latter half of the 1920s.[46] The Surrealist volume that made a definitive impact on Japanese artists was Breton's *Surrealism and Painting*. Rather than Breton's text, it was the reproductions that accompanied it that had a definitive

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[44] Beckmann, George M and Morley, James William (1974). *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp. 139-150.
[45] Hayami Yutaka (2009). *Shuruearisumu no kaiga to nihon: imēji no juyō to sōzō* [Surrealist Painting and Japan: Image Reception and Creation]. Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, p. 21.
[46] Ibid.

impact on Japanese painters, who approached the volume as a compilation of works that they otherwise could not view. The very size and number of reproductions (24 x 19 cm, each printed on a single page) made the volume impressive for its time.[47] Images from this publication were reproduced in the Japanese press since 1929 and comprised half of the illustrations in the January 1930 issue of the *Atelier*.[48] Takiguchi's translation of Breton's text into Japanese appeared in the June 1930 issue of the *Kōseikaku Jiten* (*Kōseikaku Dictionary*), with fifty out of seventy-seven reproductions from the original volume.[49] It was primarily aimed at introducing Surrealist art criticism and as it occurred two years after the original publication, Japanese painters would have by then already been involved in the production of Surrealist art.[50]

As early as 1929 Abe Seiji, Abe Kongō and Koga Harue exhibited Surrealist painting at the sixteenth exhibition of the Second Division Society (*Nikka-kai*) and thus the year was referred to as the point at which 'the age of Surrealism' started in Japanese painting in the later *Atelier* volume.[51] However, although Abe Seiji would explicitly refer to Surrealism in titles of his work, existence of Surrealist painting in Japan would be dismissed in a comment made by Arishima Ikuma in the same volume.[52] Also in the same year, Abe Kongō published *Criticism of Surrealist Painting* (*Shūrurearizumu kaiga ron*) that was only a translation of Amédée Ozenfant's *Art* (1928) in which he discussed European art movements from the late 1910s onwards, only referring to Surrealism in the closing pages.[53] Thus the absence of a single Surrealist group resulted in the fact not only that Surrealist painting would have at times been introduced in Japan without any reference to Surrealism, as in Moriguchi's 1928 article, but that by 1930 'Surrealism' would become an ambiguous term that could even stand for modernist European art, as in Abe's

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[47] Ibid, p. 30.
[48] For how the volume would also include four colour reproductions of Koga Harue's work see: Ibid, p. 31.
[49] Ibid, pp. 3-106.
[50] Ibid, pp. 32-33.
[51] Ibid, p. 48.
[52] Chōgenjitsushugi hihan [Criticising Surrealism] ([1930] 2001). In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 94.
[53] Hayami Yutaka (2009), pp. 43-44.

text. Koga's work was positioned somehow differently to other Surrealist painters, as it was developed not only in exchange with other artists who had the opportunity of studying abroad, such as Abe Seiji and Abe Kongō, but in personal engagement with Surrealist works by De Chirico and Ernst and in relation to modernist Japanese culture of the time.[54] Not only did he manage to develop an individual Surrealist theory but his preference for a realist style and fascination with László Moholy-Nagy's 'photo-plasticism' would become of key importance in the emergence of Surrealist photography at the beginning of the decade.[55]

The situation in which Surrealism in Japan existed within the movement's international framework but without the grounding in collective action or a clearly articulated political agenda had a significant impact not only on literary Surrealism or Surrealist painting, but also on the emergence and practice of Surrealist photography. The main Surrealist publications in Japan, regardless of whether they were focusing on literary or visual Surrealism, featured photography only exceptionally.[56] This attests to the fact that there was a considerable discontinuity between existing Surrealist activities in literature and visual arts with regard to any related practice simultaneously taking place in photography. As Surrealist photography in Japan thus lacks any firm grounding in the established characteristics of orthodox Surrealism and is seemingly detached from its collective, international and politically engaged character, its historical positioning remains suspended and difficult to locate.

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[54] Ibid, pp. 47-48.
[55] For Koga's involvement with 'photo plasticism' see: Ibid, pp. 58-59.
[56] For all the magazines and special volumes see: Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (1995). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu* [Japanese Surrealism]. Tokyo: Sekai Shisōsha. For volumes of the *Atelier* magazine from January 1930, *L'Echange Surréaliste* from October 1936 and the *Mizue* from June 1937 see: Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. For volumes of *Bungei Nihon*, *Ciné*, *Fantasia*, *École de Tokio* and *Yoru no Funsui* (*Night Fountain*) see: Tsuruoka Yoshihisa and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2009). *Korekushon, Toshi modanizumu shishi 3*, *Shūrurearisumu* [Collection: Poetry and Illustration of Urban Modernity, Volume 3: Surrealism]. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō. For all copies of the magazine *VOU* see: Nishimura Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2011). *Korekushon, Toshi modanizumu shishi 14, Vou kurabu no jikken* [Collection: Poetry and Illustration of Urban Modernity, Volume 14: Experiments of the *VOU* Club]. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō. See also: Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2011). *Korekushon, Toshi modanizumu shishi 15, Vou kurabu to jūgonen sensō* [Collection: Poetry and Illustration of Urban Modernity, Volume 15: *Vou* Club and Fifteen Year War]. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō.

Breton expressed an enthusiastic view of photography's mechanical features and its specific relation to reality many times, and as early as in 1920.[57] Dalí was to further advance this enthusiasm, positioning photography directly in relation to Reverdy's definition of an image as a 'pure creation of the mind' and finding in the medium an opportunity to experiment with his paranoiac-critical method after 1927.[58] Photographs were prominently featured in all of the principal Surrealist magazines: *La Révolution surréaliste* (1924-1929), *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930-1933), *Documents* (1929-1930) and *Minotaure* (1933-1939), and within Breton's own novels – *Nadja* (1928), *The Communicating Vessels* (*Les Vases communicants***,** 1932) and *Mad Love* (*L'Amour fou*, 1937).[59] As another form of the Surrealist image, they shared the same goal of disclosing limited properties of conscious understanding and representation of reality, taking advantage of their special status as both indexical and iconic signs.[60]

On the other hand, considerable lack of systematic theoretical investigation of the medium by Surrealists themselves, or the somewhat unclear position of photographers within Surrealist circles in France, make any conclusive writing on the subject problematic and consequently retrospective.[61] Early attempts at formulating a scholarship around Surrealist photography, as in Édouard Jaguer's *Mysteries of the Darkroom: Surrealism and Photography* (1982), indicated how the medium had opened new visual realms as a Surrealist practice by 'showing what the eye doesn't see' and by 'showing what the eye

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[57] 'The invention of photography has dealt a mortal blow to the old modes of expression', as per: Breton, André ([1920] 1978), p. 7. See also: Breton, André ([1935] 1974), p. 272. See also: Breton, André ([1928] 1972), p. 1.
[58] Dalí, Salvador ([1927] 2006). Photography: Pure Creation of the Mind. In: Matheson, Neil (ed.), *The Sources of Surrealism: Art in Context*. Aldershot; Burlington, Vt.: Lund Humphries, p. 373.
[59] Ades, Dawn (1985). Photography and the Surrealist Text. In: Krauss, Rosalind and Livingstone, Jane (eds.), *L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism* (Exh. Cat.). Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art: New York: London: Abbeville Press, p. 185.
[60] Krauss, Rosalind (1985). *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp. 87-118.
[61] Walker, Ian (2002). *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 8.

does see but differently'.[62] Whereas such a relationship between Surrealism and photography will remain unquestioned, subsequent studies will make attempts to either redefine Surrealism in view of photography or situate photography within the history of Surrealism.[63] Susan Sontag would thus describe photography as immanently Surrealist in character in *On Photography* (1977), but it would be Rosalind Krauss who would finally establish the photographic image in the centre of Surrealist action.[64] Krauss's curatorial project *L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*, undertaken with Jane Livingston and exhibited at the Pompidou Centre in Paris in 1985, made critical articulation of the relationship between Surrealism and photography, providing the vocabulary with which it can be discussed but it also initiated significant criticism in terms of its conceptual framework. The later studies in the area, by Ian Walker and David Bate, were to challenge respectively different approaches to the relationship, via documentary photographic practices and a wider socio-political relevance.[65]

Within such scholarship in the field of Surrealist photography, Jaguer recognised Japanese artists as important examples of the practice including Ei-Kyū and Imai Shigeru in his study.[66] This attempt, however, was lost to the 1985 Pompidou exhibition. Outlining a curatorial framework of the project, Krauss and Livingston made clear how they limited themselves to 'manifestations in France, Belgium, Germany and England'.[67] A more recent exhibition *The Subversion of Images: Surrealism, Photography, and Film* (2009), also with the Pompidou centre, signalled a significant evolution in the

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[62] Plant, Margaret (1993). Shopping for the Marvellous: The Life of the City in Surrealism. In: Lloyd, Michael (et al.), *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*. Canberra: The Gallery, p. 156.
[63] Warehime, Marja (1996). *Brassaï: Images of Culture and Surrealist Observer*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, p. 41.
[64] For understanding of photography as 'the only art that is natively surreal' see: Sontag, Susan (1977). *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, p. 40.
[65] Walker, Ian (2002). See also: Bate, David (2003). *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris.
[66] Jaguer, Édouard (1982). *Les Mystères de la chambre noire: Le Surréalisme et la photographie*. Paris: Flammarion, pp. 111-112.
[67] Krauss, Rosalind and Livingstone, Jane (eds.) (1985). *L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism* (Exh. Cat.). Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art: New York: London: Abbeville Press, p. 9.

field, including international practices as a relevant feature.[68] The tendency was clearly pointed out within the text of the accompanying catalogue, where the authors of the exhibition attested to how the previous limitation no longer sufficed. A paragraph from this text reads:

> Examination of photographic activities of Surrealists cannot any longer be delimited to the Parisian group gathered around Breton but have to be opened up to the tendencies among friends, dissidents or rivals as well as to their counterparts in Belgium, England, and Spain but also in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, or Romania. In its evident desire for internationalisation, photographic Surrealism surpassed the borders of Europe to Mexico, the US and also Japan.[69]

The 2009 exhibition, therefore, opened up the geographical scope relevant to the study of photographic Surrealism, but also credited a wider range of categories under which it can be considered. Subscribing to the concepts relevant to Surrealists themselves, it situated photography within the notions of collective, automatic, marvellous or theatrical, as another 'method' of its action.[70] Also, in terms of such practices in Japan, this exhibition included a single plate: photo-collage by Yamanaka Chirū (*Il y a un océan facile*, 1937), a Surrealist poet, critic and translator whose production of visual material was previously not as well known. Although such inclusion signalled a return to the route previously paved by Jaguer, it also indicated a significant gap in the existing scholarship. On the one hand, as the catalogue of the exhibition did not offer any details about the image or the artist, it pointed out how Japanese Surrealist photography has been significantly under-researched in the history of Surrealism. This situation can be best observed in those cases where the existence of literary Surrealism or Surrealist painting in the country would be acknowledged without a reflection on the practice of photography, as in the

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[68] For another similar attempt see: Faber, Monika (et al.) (1989). *Das Innere der Sicht: Surrealistische Fotografie der 30er und 40er Jahre: Ausstellungskatalog*. Österreichisches Fotoarchiv im Museum Moderner Kunst.
[69] Bajac, Quentin (et al.) (2009). Changer la vue. In: Bajac, Quentin (et al.), *La Subversion des Images*, *Surréalisme, Photographie, Film* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, p. 18.
[70] Ibid.

case of Gérard Durozoi's *History of the Surrealist Movement* (1997).[71] On the other hand, it pointed out how the same condition prevailed also in Japan, as the image was largely unknown in the country prior to its inclusion in the show.[72] For the present study, the inclusion of the image in the exhibition can thus be considered to represent what the influential German critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin defined as a 'zero hour' of the tri-fold subject containing Surrealism, photography and Japan, or a nodal point of intersection for discursive forces that surround it.[73]

Knowledge of Surrealist photography produced in Japan has been completely disregarded in photographic histories and reduced to sporadic mentions and elusive comments regularly featured in associated volumes, scarcely going beyond identification of individual artists or singular works in this regard.[74] A similar approach dominates in the field of Japanese modernist or so-called 'prewar' photography. Although it might be considered a general problem entailed with the archiving and collecting of photography from the period, Surrealist photographs are mostly identified individually and within existing modernist categories, such as 'new' or 'avant-garde' photography. For instance, a catalogue of the exhibition *The Founding and Development of Modern Photography in Japan*, organised by the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 1995 and focusing on photography from the period between 1922 and 1945, limits its observation of the relationship to the following paragraph:

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[71] See: Durozoi, Gérard ([1997] 2009). *History of the Surrealist Movement*. Translated by Alison Anderson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 334-336.

[72] I draw this conclusion from correspondence and two interviews with Kurosawa Yoshiteru, biographer of the artist, conducted in December 2012 and January 2013. Although Kurosawa provided detailed information about the image's existence in his previous studies, he confirmed how he has never seen the original image prior to its inclusion in the exhibition catalogue.

[73] For hos 'zero hour' is described as 'a revolutionary chance for the suppressed past', allowing the realisation of how 'the life-work is preserved and sublated *in* the work, the epoch *in* the life-work, and the entire course of history *in* the epoch' see: Benjamin, Walter ([1940] 1974). On the Concept of History [Online]. Available to access: http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/ThesesonHistory.html [Accessed on September 30, 2013].

[74] See: Rosenblaum, Naomi (1997). *A World History of Photography*. New York: Abbeville Press, p. 413. See also: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.) (2003). *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 9. See also: Parr, Martin and Badger, Gerry (2007). *The Photobook*. Volume 1. London: Phaidon Press, p. 113.

> The impact of surrealism led to the emergence of an entirely new photographic style in the late 1930s, which was concerned, with the visualization of the subconscious and fantasies through distinctive modes of photographic expression.[75]

Similarly, the later exhibition *Surrealism and Photography: Beauty Convulsed*, also organised at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 2008 included a number of Japanese photographers in the show but made no attempt at producing a coherent argument behind the production of these works.[76] In other words, within histories of photography Surrealist practice in Japan is still considered as a 'style' and related to individual examples. Although prominent photographers from the period who are known for their individual involvement with Surrealism such as Yamanaka Iwata, Yasui Nakaji or Ei-Kyū had substantial retrospective exhibitions in Japan during the last decade, they did not bring about any evolution of a coherent argument in terms of their relationship with Surrealism.[77]

Although scholarship focusing on Surrealism in Japan continuously reveals the significance of the movement in the country (and vice versa), photography is equally awaiting a comprehensive study from within this field. Groundbreaking research in the area by Vêra Linhartová (1987) introduced the Western readership to a number of original Surrealist texts published in Japanese. John Clark's *Surrealism in Japan* (1997) applied the same approach, relying on original texts in Japanese to advance the knowledge of the movement's existence in the country. Further studies showed expansion

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[75] Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (1995). *Nihon kindai shashin no seiritsu to tenkai* [*The Founding and Development of Modern Photography in Japan*] (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, p. 2.

[76] Both the catalogue of the 1995 exhibition and the promotional material of the later 2008 show accredit a film still from Man Ray's *Star Fish* (*L'Étoile de mer*, 1928) as a photograph by Nagata Isshū. I have discussed this issue in a conference paper 'Not an Ordinary Photographer: Man Ray in 1930s Japan', presented at the conference 'Exhibiting Photography', organised by the University of Westminster in collaboration with the Photographers' Gallery in London (8-10 April, 2011). An unofficial catalogue of the latter exhibition appears in the *Avantgarde International Art Magazine* (2008). Special Issue Vol. 5 and this is where this film still has finally been appropriately accredited to Man Ray.

[77] Yamanka Iwata had a retrospective exhibition with the Ashiya City Art Museum in 2003, Yasui Nakaji's retrospective travelled between Shoto Museum of Art in Tokyo and Nagoya City Art Museum in 2004 and 2005 whereas Miyazaki Prefectural Art Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Urawa Art Museum and The Japan Association of Art Museum celebrated Ei-Kyū's 100th birth anniversary with an exhibition in 2011.

of the research area. In the case of Miryam Sas, the focus was placed on literature, and especially the exchange between Takiguchi and Breton. Within such a focus on literary Surrealism, John Solt's study provided a detailed elucidation of Kitasono's work (1999). Solt's contribution to an exhibition of Yamamoto Kansuke's photographs at the Tokyo Station Gallery in 2001 was unprecedented in terms of bringing to the fore the extent of Surrealist photography practised in Japan and initiated a continuous interest in the work of this artist.[78] It was thus discussed in the recent Majella Munro's *Communicating Vessels: the Surrealist Movement in Japan 1923-1970* (2012) and was a subject of another exhibition *Japan's Modern Divide: The Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto* (at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, 2012-2013), which introduced his work to audiences in the US. Within Munro's book, only those photographers already recognised in the field, such as Yamamoto, were discussed as a part of a larger project aimed at reframing Surrealism in Japan as an interdisciplinary practice in a wider historical frame.[79] The recent exhibition, on the other hand, contextualised Yamamoto's works within the modernist divide in the history of photography, failing to acknowledge extensive and versatile forms of practice produced in the decade.[80] These latest studies, therefore, although making significant attempts at bridging a discontinuity with the postwar avant-garde art in Japan, arose as a consequence of the fact that a discursive relationship between Surrealism, photography and Japan remains 'out of sight' in current knowledge, resulting in entanglement of the existing scholarship.

Japanese Surrealism 1925-1945, a pioneering exhibition organised by the Nagoya City Art Museum in 1990 made clear to what extent Surrealism was practiced in Japan among varied artists in the period. A chapter dedicated to a

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[78] Solt, John (2001). Perception, Misperception, Nonperception. In: Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.), *Yamamoto Kansuke: Conveyor of the Impossible* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo Station, pp. 19-67.
[79] Munro, Majella (2012). *Communicating Vessels: the Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-1970*. Cambridge: Enzo Press, p.19.
[80] For how Yamamoto's work is contextualised in terms of 'influence' from abroad see: Maddox, Amanda (2013). Disobedient Spirit: Kansuke Yamamoto and his Engagement with Surrealism. In: Hamaya, Hiroshi and Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.), *Japan's Modern Divide: the Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto* (Exh. Cat.). Los Angeles, California: J. Paul Getty Museum, p. 183.

'photo avant-garde' in the accompanying catalogue included a number of primary sources and provided an overview of the chief outlets of the practice.[81] Largely carried out as a result of the individual efforts of the museum's curators, the project was followed up by a publication of fifteen volumes containing primary sources related to Surrealism in the country entitled *Collection of Surrealism in Japan* between 1999 and 2001.[82] The collection compiled primary sources published during the 1920s and 1930s, mostly in literary and art magazines, dividing them according to subjects and individuals of importance to the movement in Japan. These include volumes on criticism in poetry and visual arts, writings by the chief poets and critics (Nishiwaki, Takiguchi, Kitasono and Yamanaka), as well as artists (Koga and Abe Kongō), a separate tome on key Surrealist publications and surveys of other important individuals working across different media (Takenaka Kyushichi, Migishi Kotaro, Yoshihara Jirō, Yonekura Hisahito and Iida Misao). A volume compiled on the subject of photographic criticism by the Nagoya City Art Museum's curator Takeba Jō together with a separate volume dedicated to the works of Ei-Kyū and Shimozato Yoshio, edited by another curator in the same institution Yamada Satoshi, frame a significant part of this thesis.

In the light of previously noted limited archival access to primary sources in Japanese, the *Collection* tackles this issue on an unprecedented scale.[83] A full decade since its publication, it is starting to inform related research, expanding the knowledge of Surrealist photography in Japan. In the aftermath of its publication, for instance, Tomohiro Nishimura allocated a more prominent role to Surrealism in the 'Photography and Avant-Garde' chapter of his history of Japanese art photography (2006), although largely drawing on artist biographies to support his arguments.[84] Also, an equally significant attempt was made to engage more critically with photographic Surrealism in

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[81] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990), pp. 178-202.
[82] Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (1999-2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha.
[83] Solt, John (1999), p. 3.
[84] Noshimura Tomohiro (2008). *Nihon geijutsu shashinshi: ukiyoe kara dejikame made* [History of Art Photography in Japan: from Ukiyo-e to Digital Camera]. Kokubunji-shi: Bigaku Shuppan, pp. 215-292.

an exhibition at the Gunma Museum of Art entitled *Nature in Dreams: from Surrealism in the Early Shōwa to Contemporary Painting* (2006). The exhibition catalogue assigned a full section to photographic practices, recognising a strong presence of Surrealism throughout the 1930s to outline the formalist concerns that were the primary focus of the show.[85] However, the text did not provide a clear insight into how Surrealism might have been related to the photographic practices of the time in their totality, again listing individual artists as exemplary in the given context. Regardless of the existence and availability of the material offered in the *Collection*, no research has up to the present day concentrated solely on the context and significance of a large body of photographic work produced by a number of artists working in different ways in relation to Surrealism during the 1930s.

Munro has recently noted how the *Collection* was made partial due to the editing out of illustrations in certain facsimiles and failing to address the full scope of work by individual practitioners.[86] The partiality of the two volumes dedicated to photography equally withstands but is not due to editing out of the photographs, as Takeba's volume provides an abundance of reproductions.[87] It is rather contained in the fact that a significant context for the perception of Surrealist photographs in 1920s Japan can only be grasped within the original magazine volumes in which they have appeared. The chief methodology applied in this thesis has been to combine a close reading of the texts from the *Collection*, focusing primarily on the two photography volumes, with simultaneous research into photography and magazine collections of the time, examining material where it would have been originally published. Such an approach thus also affirms the magazines as valuable sources for historical investigation, and they are discussed as such within the thesis. Acquisition of the 'Japanese Pre-War Magazines and Photobooks' collection

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[85] Gunma Kenritsu Tatebayashi Bijutsukan (2006). *Yume no naka no shizen: Shōwa shoki no shururearisumu kara gendai no kaiga he* [Nature in Dreams: from Surrealism in the Early Shōwa to Contemporary Painting] (Exh. Cat.). Gunma Kenritsu Tatebayashi Bijutsukan, pp. 76-95.
[86] Munro, Majella (2012), Note 22, p. 16.
[87] Takeba confirmed in an interview with the author on May 24, 2013 how this project was carried out based on individual enthusiasm alongside his duties as a curator at the Nagoya City Art Museum.

by the British Museum in 2008 was of timely importance to this research, as it offered valuable access to the primary sources.[88]

Zones of indiscernibility: Backdrop of a minor history

Under such circumstances, if Surrealist photography produced in Japan during the 1930s were to be viewed and discussed on equal terms with other forms of art practice, what becomes of paramount importance is to reclaim its historical relevance. As argued elsewhere, such a step becomes a necessary requirement if this type of imagery is to be considered to have contributed significantly to the difference Surrealism was aiming to achieve with regard to how the lived experience is understood and represented internationally, regardless of, or specifically due to, a set of specific circumstances conditioning its emergence and production.[89] A concept that enables the reclaiming of historical relevance of the relationship between Surrealism and photography in Japan is that of minor literature, as defined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature* (1975). Basing their study on the work of the writer Franz Kafka, and drawing from the fact that Kafka was of Czech background but writing in German, Deleuze and Guattari developed the notion of minor literature to affirm a position of liminality. The notion, as coined in the book, does not refer to a quantitative or qualitative measure, nor is it confronted with its 'major' counterpart. Rather, it problematises the power relations within which both the minor and the major are contextualised, assigning political agency to an individual within the processes of deterritorialisation and collective assemblage, the concepts

[88] For a part of this collection see: Boeder, Titus (2007). *Japanese Photography from the Pre-War Period: Photobooks and Prints*. London: Maggs Bros. The largest collections of Japanese photo magazines are available to view at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and the JCII Library in Tokyo.

[89] Stojkovic, Jelena (2012). Systematic Confusion and the Total Discredit of the World of Reality: Surrealism and Photography in Japan of the 1930s. In: Bleyen, Mieke (ed.), *Minor Photography: Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. Leuven: University of Leuven Press, p. 180.

formulated throughout the philosophical work of Deleuze and Guattari.[90] It should be noted that minor literature is not specifically a 'literary' concern but, as Nicholas Thoburn has argued, is of equal relevance to any art form.[91]

In the original volume, the concept is bound to three defining conditions: 'deterritorialisation of language, the connection of individual to political immediacy and collective assemblage of enunciations'.[92] Under such circumstances, it allows a re-examination of Surrealist photography in Japan against precisely those characteristics seemingly detaching it from the orthodox Surrealist context. The process of deterritorialisation is understood as immanent to the movement's internationalisation, as a 'decentring process characteristic of Surrealism'.[93] However, the process of dislocation of Surrealist photography from within the Surrealist network in Europe and its relocation into the art and photographic practices in Japan was previously characterised as demonstrating the limits imposed by the lack of linguistic, cultural, theoretical and psycho-analytical tools for understanding the complex and multi-layered implications of Surrealism.[94] Further, the well-known fact of how Surrealism operated in Japan outside of a single group resulted in dismissing its potential to produce a socially engaging and politically relevant practice. Further more, the existing scholarship is based upon the singling out of individual examples, failing to identify the varied relations existing between them. Thus the approach in which Surrealist photography in Japan is discussed through the lens of the concept of minor literature offers great potential as it affirms precisely those means of differentiation that have so far been perceived to be limiting and restraining its historical positioning. However, it also entails an implication that the same concept, understood as indicating movements and formations of minorities defined by their position in

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[90] Stivale, Charles J (2005). *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, pp. 110-111.
[91] Thoburn, Nicholas (2003). *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. London; New York: Routledge, p. 18.
[92] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix ([1975] 1986). *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 18.
[93] Adamowicz, Elza (2006). Off the Map: Surrealism's Uncharted Territories. In: Adamowicz, Elza (ed.), *Surrealism: Crossings/Frontiers*. New York: P.Lang, p. 197.
[94] Japan Professional Photography Society (1971). *The History of Japanese Photography: 1840-1945*. Tokyo: Heibonsha, pp. 410-411.

existing power relations, would resonate in approaching all non-Western, postcolonial, women, gay and lesbian writers as its practitioners.[95] The approach could thus involve questioning whether Surrealism was a 'minor' force in itself.

'Platform for Prague', a joint declaration written between Surrealists in Paris and Prague on the occasion of *The Pleasure Principle*, an international Surrealist exhibition held in Prague in April 1968 states how 'Surrealism is naturally a minority activity'.[96] This position is based upon 'its refusal to admit the categories of reality as definitive' and efforts precisely aimed at the 'abolition of these categories, which implies recognition of their transitory nature'.[97] The text recognises how the 'minority condition' of Surrealism is foremost a complex one, not situated in the opposition of a minority to a majority but in 'the status of an idea in a nascent state in the midst of received ideas'.[98] In 1969, the year of collapse of the French group, Czech Surrealists reaffirmed this position in 'The Possible Against the Current':

> In placing the accent on the 'minority' character of surrealism, the signatories of the 'Platform of Prague' already showed that in their eyes adhesion to Lautréamont's theory of the universality of poetry and our interpretation of it was only one of manifestations, today surpassed, of the enthusiasm and messianism of surrealism in its beginnings. History proves that evolution occurs in an irregular way, according to traces that cannot be generalized without making them at the same time entirely fictional. Surrealism's force of inspiration cannot be exercised effectively outside the sphere of the spirit, the domain of minority.[99]

The 'minority' character of Surrealism thus acknowledged multiple and 'irregular' routes through which it would manifest itself in the search for liberation of the mind. The 'surpassed messianism' from the text, however, implies that the challenge of Surrealism through the notion of minor literature could entail a similar challenging of all historical avant-gardes against the

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[95] Stivale, Charles J (2005), p. 119.
[96] Richardson, Michael and Fijalkowski, Krzysztof (2011). *Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations*. London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, p. 61.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid, p. 68.

concept. Such an endeavour would far outreach the scope of this study, which makes use of the concept as a tool through which a historical account of the relationship between Surrealism and photography in 1930s Japan can be introduced into our existing knowledge in an affirmative, inclusive and relevant manner.

The significance of the notion of minor literature against the potential for writing histories has been established in the work of the conceptual artist Mike Kelley, as elaborated by Joseph Brandon. For Kelley, minor histories are those histories that are yet to be written and that have to 'find their way into history' as parasitic constructions on those already existing forms 'that are considered worthy of consideration'.[100] In the case of Surrealist photography in Japan of the 1930s, such already existing forms would imply several already established photographic categories, such as 'new', 'avant-garde', 'plastic', art and photojournalist, all of which had their specific manifestations in the country. Surrealism was a decisive framework for photography production in Japan throughout the decade. Starting with 'new' photography (*shinkō shashin*), especially relevant at the beginning of the 1930s, its relevance grew stronger within the 'avant-garde' (*zen'ei*) image production, especially significant in the immediate response to the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* in 1937. It continued to contextualise production of what became known as 'plastic' photography (*zōkei shashin*) in the years between 1939 and 1941, enforced by banning of the term 'avant-garde' in 1939. Also, the significance of Surrealism for all practices of photography in the 1930s can be recognised against art photography (*geijutsu shashin*), establishing itself as an independent art form in the decade, and photojournalism (*hōdō shashin*), taking up a dominant position since approximately 1934. Such categories of Japanese modernist photography can be seen in the specific context as 'major' strands of practice against which a 'minor' history of Surrealist photography in Japan needs to be inscribed. It is therefore not unexpected that a number of figures of primary importance to such history would equally retain a place within its major rendering. Most of the artists

[100] Wayne Joseph, Branden (2008). *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage: a 'Minor' History*. New York: Zone Books, p. 48.

previously singled out in terms of their Surrealist practice, such as Ei-Kyū or Yasui, retain a strong position in major histories of Japanese photography. As inhabitants of aesthetic 'zones of indiscernibility', or 'fringes of major movements or styles', they remain in an active relation to them.[101] It is in the zones of such a complex register that a minor history of the relationship between Surrealism and photography is positioned, related to all major categories of practice during the 1930s.

With such a historical reading, the concept allows a disruption of the historical account of Japanese art and photography and extends the project of internationalising the discourse on Surrealist photography. Viewing the history of Japanese Surrealist photography as a case of a minor history offers a method for affirming its scope, role and importance, a requirement if this type of imagery is to be considered within the discourse on Surrealist photography as such. It offers a possibility of examining if and how this particular minor history contributes to the discursive space of Surrealist photography or Surrealism on the one hand, and of histories of Japanese photography and art on the other. In this perspective, Yamanaka's *Il y a un océan facile* becomes a 'zero hour' of such history in the present, opening the space for its affirmation. As a result of a deterritorialised practice with an immanent political agency produced within an alternative network of related photographers in the decade, the image, however, does not offer 'the point of origin' of the discourse.[102]

Chapter 1 returns to multiple 'points of origin' revealing how the relationship between Surrealism and photography in Japan did not emerge from a single facet but was framed by simultaneous developments of urban modernity, the flourishing of 'new' photography and its aspiration as an art practice in the first part of the decade. In this chapter, I focus on photographs by Nakayma, Koishi Kiyoshi and Ei-Kyū to show how Surrealist photography was a deterritorialised practice diverging from the mainstream in a movement from

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[101] Ibid, p. 51.
[102] 'The act of returning to the point of origin does not seek to correct or to complete an 'incorrect' or 'incomplete' historical understanding. It seeks, rather, to rebegin the discourse, to initiate it anew such that its structure develops differently, encompasses and entails other (equally concrete and consequential) aspects of its historical development', as per: Ibid, p. 43.

‘new’ to ‘avant-garde’ photography in the period from 1930 to 1936.

Chapter 2 introduces the framework of ‘photo avant-garde’ as the most prominent point of reference for the practice of Surrealist photography in Japan during the decade. In this chapter I discuss the development of a specific photographic avant-garde with regard to exhibitions of Surrealist art in 1932 and 1937. I also introduce the main critical voices establishing themselves around the country in the amateur photo clubs in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, including Takiguchi, Hanawa Gingo and Sakata Minoru, and propose how they need to be regarded in relation to each other. The specific position of Surrealist texts and images within the photo magazines of the time is affirmed in this chapter as a specific characteristic of the processes of reterritorialisation of Surrealist photography within the conditions of an increasing oppression of the freedom of thought.

Chapter 3 proceeds with an in-depth image analysis of staged photography in the amateur photo clubs in Osaka, based on photographs exhibited at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium in 1938. In this chapter, I establish how the relationship between Surrealism and photography cannot be condensed to the specific ‘avant-garde’ discourse but was rather embedded within experiments with the Surrealist object, the main strand of Surrealist research in the 1930s. I also introduce in this chapter the complexity of the political situation in the decade through the concept of the ‘national body’ (*kokutai*), made official in 1937.

Chapter 4 continues to reframe the photographs seen at the 1938 symposium through the production of Surrealist photo-collages. I argue in this chapter how Surrealist photography was invested in undoing representation through breaking away from both spatial and temporal coherence of the photographic print and was thus directly critical of the ‘national body’. I further argue for the collective character of Surrealist photography through the concept of ‘assemblage’ in order to affirm the multifaceted relations between individual practitioners or clubs within their minor historical formation.

Chapter 5 elucidates further the relevance of the Surrealist object research for the practice of Tokyo and Nagoya clubs. I examine in this chapter the

photographic landscapes produced with regard to the key Surrealist texts focusing on the Surrealist object in Japanese. I also provide a detailed reading of a specific practice developing among Nagoya photographers with regard to natural objects, exemplified in the production of the album *Mesemb Genus* (1940). I show how this practice reflected the urgency for a politically effective action among Surrealist artists of the younger generation at the time in which the possibility of revolutionary subjectivity was being removed from language.

Chapter 6 introduces the concept of 'photo plasticity' as reframing the relationship between Surrealism and photography after the ban of the word 'avant-garde' in 1939. In this chapter, I bring to the fore the relevance of materiality and abstraction for the production of the Surrealist photo-objects in various practices in Tokyo, Nagoya and Fukuoka. I also offer an in-depth study of a photographic project developed by Sakata in this year, against the recognition of photography as an art form taking place at the same time.

Chapter 7 explores the complex relationship between Surrealist photography and the predominant photojournalism in the two years leading up to the Pacific War (1939-1940). I show in this chapter how photography was becoming a politically charged medium due to its exposure at the international expositions in the latter part of the decade. I focus on Abe Yoshifumi's photographic work produced in the domain of the 'straight shot' as an example of the relationship between Surrealism and photojournalism. I also provide a close reading of a joint project developed among the members of Nagoya and Fukuoka clubs, to argue how it set out to reclaim the space of locality from its use in the nationalist propaganda programme.

Conclusion opens up the thesis to related strands of research in the postwar period. I reflect on the findings of the thesis but I also reframe partially its subject matter in the 1950s as a means to affirm its relevance for an adequate understanding of the history of Japanese art of the twentieth century.

Chapter 1

Points of origin: Making visible the yet unseen

Rooted in the absence of a single Surrealist group, the relationship between Surrealism and photography in Japan was forged under complex circumstances framed by several key factors. One of them was the rise of urban, modern culture in the late 1920s, following the Great Kanto Earthquake. This urban culture fostered ‘new’ photography, but also a type of artistic sensibility looking to utilise the mechanical apparatus of the camera in the service of Surrealism, informed by Japanese Surrealist painting. The emergence of Surrealist photography was thus divorced from a firm rooting in collective Surrealist action but was also distanced from any recognised means of practice. Such emergence of Surrealist photography in Japan is discussed in this chapter through the works produced by Koishi Kiyoshi and Nakayama Iwata. As both of these photographers were situated in the western Kansai region of Japan, these works also reveal how progressive approaches to the medium were rising with more ease in smaller urban centres and away from the centre of governmental control, tightening its grip on urban culture in the aftermath of the Manchuroan Incident in 1931.

Whereas the rise of ‘new’ photography also reflected on the country’s celebration of modern speed and technology, the practice of Surrealism offered a critical distance from the processes of industrialisation. Such positioning is examplified in this chapter through Ei-Kyū’s early photogram production. Development of his unique photographic project that combined photography, photogram and collage techniques also offers insight into how Surrealist photography gradually became associated with ‘avant-garde’ during the stable years in the first part of the decade (1932-1937).

‘Recoded’ modernity and ‘image-value’ of a Surrealist city

The Great Kanto Earthquake occurred on September 1 in 1923 and destroyed much of Tokyo’s city area. It had a similarly catastrophic impact in Japan as the aftermath of the First World War in Europe and induced an equal amount of changes to everyday life as those unravelling on the streets of European metropolitan centres of the time. Reconstruction started even before the flames were put out and although it obliterated many of the old customs it equally reaffirmed the city’s position as the capital of the country, populated with around six million people by 1932.[1] Numerous changes to city life coincided with the reconstruction, and started taking place after 1923.[2] It was not only a new infrastructure but also a city culture that was ingrained in the rebuilding of Tokyo. Rather than being condensed within national borders or traditional manners and customs, a post-traditional rebuilt city was primarily characterised by an open flow of capital. It was essentially tied to modernism, a bundle of cultural practices termed in Japanese as ‘modern’ (*modan*). Fascination with ‘modern life’, a concept inseparable from the rise and changes of the city culture, took predominance over both politics and morals in the post-earthquake period.[3] Such changes inflicted to everyday life by the reconstruction of Tokyo were epitomised in the appearance of a ‘modern girl’ (*moga*), recognisable by Western clothes and short hair-cut, and accompanied by her male escort ‘modern boy’ (*mobo*), with Ginza district considered their favourable playground.

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[1] For a detailed description of the destruction see: Seidensticker, Edward (1990). *Tokyo Rising, the City Since the Great Earthquake*. New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, p. 8.

[2] These included radio broadcasting (1925), proliferation of bars, cafés and tearooms, denser bus and suburban railway networks together with the beginning of subway system (1927), the growth of department stores and modern business offices, as per: Silverberg, Miriam (2006). *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 29. It was not until after the earthquake that the large department stores started introducing a Western style of shopping, allowing customers to keep their footwear on while in store. Before the earthquake they would be provided with slippers, similarly as in Japanese homes, as per: Ibid, p. 30.

[3] Smith, Henry (1978). Tokyo as an Idea: An Exploration of Japanese Urban Thought Until 1945. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 69.

Paris underwent a series of similar changes as post-earthquake Tokyo in the decades from 1890 to 1930, in the shift from industrial production to consumer capitalism.[4] Explored by a coherent Surrealist group, however, it became an ultimate site of Surrealist revolution, enveloping its streets, cafés, flea markets and shopping arcades.[5] Drawing on Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), a text establishing how even the most mundane situation could carry unexpected meanings, Surrealists explored the everyday as a site of 'dynamic social reality', a space where a common experience enclosed deeper conflicts and contradictions.[6] As such, experience of the city takes up a central place in Surrealist writing, in Louis Aragon' *Paris Peasant* (*Le Paysan de Paris*, 1926) as well as in Philippe Soupault's *Last Nights of Paris* (*Les Dernières nuits de Paris*, 1928). Experience of everyday city life unravelling in the streets is also the main feature of the most prominent of Breton's novels: *Nadja*, *The Communicating Vessels*, and *Mad Love*. For Surrealists, offering alternative perspectives on reality unravelling in the everyday street life was a means of recognising the discrepancy between reality and an image claiming to represent it.[7] This offered an opportunity to reclaim suppressed realms of human experience and embrace contradiction, difference, multiplicity, rupture and incongruity as its intrinsic elements.[8] Photography constituted a significant means by which the Surrealist experience of everyday city culture was rendered visible. It was the photographic representation of the city, a container or an archive of potentiality for a surreal experience that inscribed it with an 'image-value', in which the icons of commodity such as the shop window or the advertisement sign symbolised both the 'derision of society' in Marxist terms and the 'absolute of desire' in the language of Freud.[9] Independent photographic

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[4] Waltz, Robin (2000). *Pulp Surrealism: Insolent Popular Culture in Early Twentieth Century Paris.* Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 2.
[5] Sheringham, Michael (2006). *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 72.
[6] Harootunian, Harry D. (2000). *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice and the Question of Everyday Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 69.
[7] Lichtenstein, Therese (et al.) (2009). *Twilight Visions, Surrealism and Paris.* Berkeley: University of California Press, p.16.
[8] Stich, Sidra (1990). *Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art*. Berkeley: University Art Museum; New York: Abbeville Press, p. 11.
[9] Rancière, Jacques ([2003] 2007). *The Future of the Image*. London, New York: Verso, p. 17.

practices taking up the city streets as their subject matter and particularly those of Eugène Atget and Brassaï, are considered as model examples of Surrealist vision in such sense.

In Japan, however, Surrealist 'image-value' of the city remains blurred with the preoccupation with 'modern life'. For example, if experiences of the Opera Passageway described by Aragon in the *Paris Peasant* were re-enacted in post-earthquake Tokyo they would conjure up a mixture of Ginza and Asakusa pleasures. In addition to the café culture, newly refurbished department stores in Ginza started becoming important cultural institutions, not only offering consumer goods but entertainment and art.[10] The experience of these modernist shrines of commodity could be compared to a sensation offered by the mixture of shops in Parisian Arcades or *Le Bon Marché* department store.[11] Asakusa district, on the other hand, would provide a more run down alternative, especially to a night visitor. A part of the old town still trying to hold on to its pre-earthquake fame, it was considered the most colourful city district, one lined with theatres and a home to city beggars, workmen and artisans. As a centre of popular culture, it was a crowded place where the 'lesser' lived, and offered an opposite to the 'antiquarian and academic' tastes of the 'Higher City' to the West of the Imperial Palace.[12] Asakusa featured all types of entertainment, including theatre, cinema, public performances and freak shows, on offer to a mélange of visitors mingling with each other.[13] It was also a favoured place of the modernist Japanese literati, most prominently Kawabata Yasunari, but also Tanizaki Junichirō and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke.[14] Finally, it was recognised as of importance in the sociological and cultural studies of modernism, researched at the time by

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[10] Clark, John (1998). Introduction. In: Menzies, Jackie (ed.), *Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art*. Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, p. 39.
[11] For such experience of department stores in Japan see: Burgin, Victor (1996). *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 109-116.
[12] Seidensticker, Edward (1990), pp. 3-4.
[13] Angels, Jeffrey (2008). Seeking the Strange: Ryōki and the Navigation of Normality in Interwar Japan. *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 63, No. 1, p. 115.
[14] Ibid, p. xix. See also: Lippit, Seiji M. (2002). *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York: University of Columbia Press, p. 139.

intellectuals such as Kon Wajiro and Gonda Yasunosuke.[15] However, whereas Aragon's experience of the Arcades is considered a 'guidebook to Surrealism', its documentary style functioning as a means of transcribing primarily a Surrealist experience and a Surrealist vision of the city, the closest example of such literary achievement in Japan, Kawabata's *Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* (1930) would remain on the level of 'documentary fiction' only.[16] The novel, first published in sequels for two years from 1929 in the daily *Asahi Shimbun (Asahi Newspaper*) popularised The Casino Folies, a revue company established in Asakusa in the same year.[17] However, the similarity of the entertainment on offer to the low-key dance and music halls frequented by Surrealists in Paris lacked the presence of an organised Surrealist group to inscribe it with Surrealist vision and invest it with an 'image-value'. In other words, regardless of the strong resemblance in the modernist urban culture of the day in Paris and Tokyo, the enfolding of Surrealist practice with the street life as politically active action was rendered impossible in Japan by a significantly different political climate.

[15] For how Gonda would recommend his students to walk the streets of Asakusa for material on popular culture of the day proclaiming 'Asakusa is your text' see: Silverberg, Miriam (1992). Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 30.
[16] Waltz, Robin (2000), p. 33. See also: Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 194.
[17] Located on the second floor of an aquarium, in a back street, it carried a name inspired by the Folies Bergere and the Casino de Paris, as per: Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 235.

Figure 1.1: Kuwabara Kineo, *Asakusa Rokku District*, 1935.

Asakusa's entertainment district, known as the 'sixth' (*rokku*), can be seen in its full glory in Kuwabara Kineo's *Asakusa Rokku District* (1935), a photograph from his project invested in recording the street life of the capital (Figure 1.1). As Kuwabara later recalled, his work aimed to produce 'commemorative photographs of the intimate encounter' between himself and the city and thus evokes the Surrealist experience of modernist urbanity.[18] Divorced from focused Surrealist research, however, it did not amount to more than being regularly featured in magazine volumes of the time.[19] Nevertheless,

[18] Kaneko, Ryūichi and Vartanian, Ivan (eds.) (2009). *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and 70s.* Tokyo: Akaaka-sha, p. 184.

[19] The project was not known before the 1970s, when rediscovery of the artist's archive by Nobuyoshi Araki resulted in its republication, as per: Kuwabara Kineo (1974). *Tokyo Shōwa jūichinen: Kuwabara Kineo shashin shū* [Tokyo (in the Eleventh Year of Shōwa), 1936: Photography Collection of Kuwabara Kineo]. Tokyo: Shōbunsha. A full feature dedicated to photographs from the later volume was published in the February 1937 issue of the *Kamera Āto*, edited at the time by Katsuta Yasuo, an active supporter of the proletarian art movement, as per: *Kamera Āto* (1937). Vol. 5, No. 2, unpaginated. In the issue, Kimura Ihei compared Kuwabara's work to that of Eugène Atget, as per: Kaneko, Ryūichi (2003). Realism and Propaganda, The Photographer's Eye Trained on Society. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.),

Kawabata's *Scarlet Gangs of Asakusa* and Kuwabara's *Tokyo, 1936* (1974) ascertain how various practices of intensifying experience of city culture also existed in Japan. Although Surrealists based their 'sense of the street' upon the poetic tradition of Charles Baudelaire and Guillaume Apollinaire, they were primarily concerned 'with the disruptive forces which lay behind the façade of normality'.[20] Such disruptive forces bound up with popular city culture of the late 1920s and during the 1930s in Japan were synonymous with a catch phrase 'erotic, grotesque, nonsense' (*ero guro nansensu*). The combination of the three, rather than understood literally in their celebration of anything pornographic, unseemly and silly should be re-read against their specific meanings within the cultural policies and mass media of the time. For Miriam Silverberg, the ubiquitous 'erotic' stood for the 'energized and colourful vitality' of the culture that celebrated new forms of 'physical expressiveness'.[21] Silverberg's interpretation of the 'grotesque', usually read against malformed or obscenely criminal, connects the term to the experiences of socially deprived, coping with the depression, whereas the 'nonsense' is given a political agency via the ironic power of humour and comedy.[22] In Silverberg's opinion, such an interpretation of these terms can be produced in the practice of 'code-switching'. Consumer culture that is 'coded' as Western becomes 'decoded' and 'recoded' as 'modern' in a process that allows 'inserting words from one language into a discourse of another'.[23] In essence, the process allows for the same set of words to develop different meanings depending on the cultural practices in which they are imbedded.

The History of Japanese Photography. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 191. His photographs were also featured in the March issue of the *Foto Taimusu* in the same year.

[20] Walker, Ian (2002). *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 32. For Walker, this practice was most apparently manifesting in the fascination with the master criminal character of the *Fantômas* series created in 1911. The fascination extended to the *Détective* , a 'true crime' magazine launched in 1928, as per: Ibid, pp. 32-34. In Japan, translations of Western detective stories and Japanese crime fiction by writers such as Edogawa Rampo and Yokomizo Seishi had a great following in the *Shin Seinen* (*New Youth*), popular among the young generation in the years between 1930 and 1938, as per: Hidebumi, Hashi (1998). Magazines from the Mobo Moga Era. In: Menzies, Jackie (ed.), *Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art*. Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW p. 112.

[21] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), pp. 29-30.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid, pp. 32-33.

The very phrase, strongly demarcating the aesthetics of Japanese popular culture in the late 1920s and early 1930s, can in a number of ways be related to Surrealist glorification of crime fiction and black humour. Surrealists saw interest in the popular imagination as a means of liberating the mind against the constraints of social and political conservatism. This interest can especially be linked to Silverberg's interpretation of 'nonsense' humour as seeking to 'negate that which was treated with respect by society'.[24] In such sense, it can be regarded as a 'recoded' notion of 'black humour', to which Breton dedicated the *Anthology of Black Humour* (*L'Anthologie de l'humour noir*, 1940), developing Freud's understanding of humour as a rebellious action, affirmation of the pleasure over the reality principle.[25] On the other hand, her report on how the 'grotesque' was perceived as 'that which leads to feeling of strong distaste, or creeping as one turns away from a human being while at the same time wondering what is it, wanting at the same time to look' would strongly resonate with Freud's essay *The Uncanny* (1919), of great importance to Surrealists. [26] The very process of 'decoding' and 'recoding' of the separate elements of the catch phrase, as defined by Silverberg, thus allows examination of how certain cultural practices manifested themselves around the world. As such, it can be considered synonymous with mutually interconnected processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation as described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The authors understand the process of deterritorialisation as a 'perfectly positive power' that is always accompanied with reterritorialisation, its 'flipside or complement'.[27] Following this argument, if the process of deterritorialisation is understood as immanent to Surrealism's internationalisation, the specific situation in which urban culture would not be of central focus to Surrealist practice regardless of its

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[24] Ibid, p. 231.
[25] Breton, André ([1940] 1997). *Anthology of Black Humour.* San Francisco: City Lights Books, pp. i-xix. See also: Rubin Suleiman, *S*usan (2003). Surrealist Black Humour: Masculine/Feminine. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 1, p. 2 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal1/acrobat_files/Suleiman.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[26] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 115.
[27] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix ([1980] 1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 5.

primary role in the Parisian group would not be specific to Japan.[28] However, the consequence of Surrealism's international deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in Japan was not its detachment from everyday modern life but reterritorialisation in those forms of practice that would be tolerated by the governmental authority. Under such terms, Silverberg's notion of 'code-switching' should be extended into understanding of Surrealist photography in Japan as emerging in relation to 'recoded' or reterritorialised forms of cultural practices situated in a context of Japanese modernist culture.

'New' photography, new sensibility

Photographic practice that was entwined with the rising urban culture in Japan was that of 'new' photography, flourishing in the wake of the *German International Travelling Photography Exhibition* (*Doitsu kokusai idō shashinten*), a photographic part of the *International Exhibition of the German Industrial Confederation, Film and Photo* (*Internationale Ausstellung des Deutschen Werkbunds Film und Foto*) that toured Tokyo and Osaka in 1931. The exhibition in Germany was originally organised in Stuttgart by Gustav Stoz in 1929, and included works by photographers from Europe, the US and the Soviet Union, demonstrating international character of the New Vision photography. Developed at the end of the 1920s, the 'New Vision' came to stand for a new approach to recording on film the emerging modern world by diverse camera angles and original framing.[29] The exhibition travelled to Zurich, Berlin, Danzig, Vienna, Agram, Munich, Tokyo and Osaka and consisted of historical and contemporary sections, encompassing medical,

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[28] For how little the image of London featured in English Surrealism of the 1930s see: Walker, Ian (2007). *So Exotic, So Homemade: Surrealism, Englishness and Documentary Photography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 5.

[29] Rocco, Vanessa (2004). *Before Film und Foto: Pictorialism to the New Vision in German Photography Exhibitions from 1909-29*. PhD thesis, The City University of New York. See also: Morris Hambourg, Maria and Phillips, Christopher (1989). *The New Vision, Photography Between the World Wars*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Distributed by H.N.Abrams, pp. 91-92. The original exhibition had various predecessors in Germany, including *International Photography Exhibition* held in Frankfurt in 1926 and reported on in Japanese, as per: *Asahi Kamera* (1926). Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 215.

commercial, photojournalistic, Bauhaus and Surrealist photography with around 1000 photographers exhibited.[30] The exhibition in Japan was organised by artists Murayama Tomoyoshi and Okada Sōzō, who saw the original show while studying in Berlin. In Tokyo, it was held in April 1931, at the head office of the *Asahi Shimbun*, sponsor of the exhibition.[31] Offering an opportunity to view original prints of the New Vision on a large scale for the first time, the overall effect of the exhibition in Japan was that of a shock that triggered a whole new approach to practising photography around the country.[32] It was a true event in the photographic world of Japan, one that marked the moment of before and after, or as one of the best-established photographers of the time Kimura Ihei defined it, 'the border between the old and the new' in Japanese photography.[33]

The new approach was termed *shinkō shashin*, which translates as 'new' photography. The term was coined in relation to the New Vision, as elaborated in László Moholy-Nagy's *Painting, Photography, Film* (1925). Such practice of photography was first introduced to Japan in the late 1920s by avant-garde artists with strong links to both Europe and Russia. Murayama, who was among the organisers of the exhibition, played a significant role in this regard. His relationship with the sponsor was established in a series of articles that he wrote for the company's newly launched *Asahi Kamera* (*Asahi Camera*, 1926) alongside Nakada Sadanosuke, which were the first articles focusing on modernist photography in the country.[34] The term also resonated

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[30] Fujimura Satomi (2005). *An Introduction to the History of Photography, Part 2: Creation*. Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, pp. 96-97.
[31] For how the images that especially received good reception in Japanese press were those by Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer see: Kuhn, Christine (2006). Film und Foto International Exhibition. In: Mori Art Museum (ed.), *Tokyo-Berlin / Berlin*-Tokyo (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, pp. 186-187.
[32] Iizawa, Kōtarō (2006). Japanese Photographers and Berlin. In: Mori Art Museum (ed.), *Tokyo-Berlin / Berlin*-Tokyo (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, p. 37. For detailed analysis of the responses to the exhibition see: Iizawa, Kōtarō (1988). *Shashin ni kaere: kōga no jidai* [Return to Photography: The Age of Kōga]. Tokyo: Heibonsha, pp. 50-54.
[33] Ina Nobuo (1978). *Shashin, Shōwa gojūnenshi* [Photography, History of Fifty Years of Shōwa]. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, p. 34.
[34] Murayama returned to Japan in 1923 after spending eight months in Berlin. After studying at Bauhaus, Nakada returned in 1925 whereas the magazine was launched in April 1926. See: Nakada Sadanosuke (1926). Shashin geijutsu no shin keikō [New Trends in Art Photography]. *Asahi Kamera*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 363-368. Nakada Sadanosuke (1926). Man Rei no chūshō shashin [Man Ray's Abstract Photography]. *Asahi Kamera*, Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 485-488. Murayama Tomoyoshi (1926). Burugiēru no geijutsu shashin [Bruguière's Art

with the activities of the New Photography Study Group (*Shinkō Shashin Kenkyūkai)* founded in 1930 by the chief editor of the *Foto Taimusu* (*Photo Times*) Senichi Kimura after interviewing Moholy-Nagy on his visit to Europe in 1929.[35] The founding of the group, also including a doyen of modernist Japanese photography Horino Masao, coincided with a monthly column established in the same magazine and titled 'Modern Photo', which was aimed at promoting 'new' photography, mostly evolving around photogram and photomontage techniques, as well as introducing works of foreign photographers to the Japanese public.[36] Finally, the term reflected the modernist atmosphere of the time, with the word 'new' (*shinkō*) featured frequently in the titles of diverse magazines during the 1920s.[37] These magazines included the *Shinkō Bungaku* (*New Literature*, 1922) and the *Shinkō Geijutsu* (*New Art*, 1929) and already established the word as a synonym for progressive, fresh and modern styles in culture that was undergoing a period of financial prosperity, urbanisation and modernisation during the liberal years of the 'Taishō democracy' (1912-1926).

Karen Frazer noted how the rapid modernisation of the city structure in the post-earthquake period had close links with the rise of 'new' photography. For Frazer, the uses of new technology in the reconstruction of the city became a favoured subject of photographers fascinated with the 'machine age', as exemplified in Horino Masao's album *The Character of Greater Tokyo* (*Dai Tokyo no seikaku*, 1931).[38] The relation between 'machine age' and 'new' photography was particularly explored in his collaborative projects with an art critic Itagaki Takao, going back to late 1920s. An album published by the two in 1929 titled *The Correspondence Between Machine and Art* (*Kikai to*

Photography]. *Asahi Kamera*, Vol. 2, No. 6, pp. 581-585. Murayama Tomoyoshi (1926). Rishitsukī no shinkina geijutsu shashin [Lissitzky's New Art Photography], *Asahi Kamera*, Vol. 2, No. 10, pp. 358-361.

[35] Masuda, Rei (1997). Japanese Photography of the 1920s and 1930s: Photographic Works of Kōshirō Onchi, Osamu Shiihara and Ei-Kyū. In: Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art (ed.), *Traces of Light in Modernism* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, p. 8.

[36] Iizawa, Kōtarō (1988), p. 47.

[37] Ibid, p. 32.

[38] Frazer, Karen (2011). *Photography and Japan*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 128. *Dai Tokyo no seikaku* [The Character of Great Tokyo] was published in the *Chūō Kōron* in October 1931.

geijutsu to no kōryū) established the grounds for celebration of photography's mechanical properties by critics involved with the rising 'new' photography.[39] However, modernisation also propelled the integration of photography with everyday life. Intrinsically elusive in nature, the everyday was attached to the city life unravelling on its streets, and was subjected to the photographic eye. For Iizawa Kōtarō, the rise of 'new' photography was firmly embedded in the practices of 'modern life', cultivated in the everyday urban culture around the establishments of cafés, dance halls and revue theatres. It was precisely by the means of photography that this culture was visualised, and made consciously legible.[40]

Integration of photography with everyday life was enabled by the proliferation of photographic magazines, coinciding with the urbanisation of the capital Tokyo. The first photographic weekly *Asahi Gurafu* (*Asahi Graph*) was established following the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 whereas the monthly *Foto Taimusu* was launched in the following year.[41] Even these early periodicals enlisted university professors as their contributors and published articles on art photography.[42] They catered to an entirely new public, that of amateur photographers, which also expanded during this period. The first amateur clubs established in Japan were the Naniwa Photography Club (*Naniwa Shashin Kurabu*, Osaka, 1904) and the Tokyo Photography Learning

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[39] Horino Masao and Itagaki Takao (1929). *Kikai to geijutsu to no kōryū* [The Correspondence Between Machine and Art]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
[40] Iizawa Kōtarō (1982). Modanizmu to shite no shinkō shashin [New Photography and Modernism]. In: Minami Hiroshi (ed.), *Nihon Modanizumu no kenkyū: shisō, seikatsu, bunka* [Study of Japanese Modernism: Thought, Life, Culture]. Tokyo: Burēn Shupan, p. 209.
[41] Iizawa Kōtarō (1989). *Toshi no shisen: Nihon no shashin 1920-30 nendai* [The View of the City: Japanese Photography in the 1920s-1930s]. Osaka-shi: Sōgensha, p. 17. The first issue of the magazine featured images of devastation caused by the Great Kanto earthquake, as per: Gardner, William (1999). *Avant-Garde Literature and the New City: Tokyo 1923-1931*. PhD thesis, Stanford University, pp. 11-12. The *Datsuei Yawa* (*Photographic Tales*) was the foremost photographic magazine in Japan, first published in 1874, and was followed by the *Shashin Shinpō* (*Photographic News*), a monthly specialising in photography that ran from 1882, as per: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.) (2003), p. 378. In the early 1900s, over 180 different magazines were catering to specialised audiences, including schoolboys and middle class housewives. Between 1918 and 1932, the number of periodicals tripled, reaching the figure of 11.118 state registered periodicals, as per: Silverberg, Miriam (2006), pp. 24-25.
[42] Minami Hiroshi (1987). *Shōwa bunka 1925-1945* [Shōwa Culture 1925-1945]. Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, p. 436.

Club (*Tokyo Shashin Kenkyūkai*, Tokyo, 1907).[43] A strong focus of these clubs since their inception was not only on practising photography as a means of documenting and recording everyday life, but on advancing artistic experimentation within the context of art photography (*geijutsu shashin*).[44]

Against such a background, some of the best known photographs epitomising 'new' photography practice were published in the *Kōga*, a Tokyo based publication that provided a platform for pushing forward the possibilities of the medium. Reading as 'Pictures of Light', the magazine was launched by Nakayama Iwata together with Nojima Yasuzo, Akiba Kei and Kimura Ihei. It focused on subjects such as city scenes, portraits, machines and objects and materialised fascination of the camera eye with the rising modern life.[45] In the short course of its running over eighteen issues published during 1932 and 1933 the magazine helped establish Japanese photography historians and critics in their own right, outside of any foreign references, and affirmed the practice of 'new' photography on the level of commercial activity.[46] The first issue featured a highly acclaimed manifesto-like article 'Return to Photography' by Ina Nobuo and set up a high standard for subsequent contributions. In this article, Ina understood photography as liberated from the weight of history, tradition and past, burdening other art practices. He recognised how 'photography is a child of the machine culture', bound to its machine-made properties.[47] He asked photography to create a new space for itself as an independent art form, saying:

> Sever relations with art photographers! Destroy the concepts of contemporary art! Smash the idol and depart! Adroitly appreciate the machine-like quality of photography![48]

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[43] By 1925 the numbers reached 219 clubs in Kansai and 201 in Kanto, with the total of 7000 members enlisted, as per: Iizawa Kōtarō (1989), p. 21.
[44] By the 1930s, amateur practitioners of photography would have expanded from specialised professionals in areas such as medicine to the new city dwellers - office workers and public servants, as per: Minami Hiroshi (1987), pp. 436-438.
[45] For all issues of the magazines see: Akiba Kei and Iizawa Kōtarō (eds.) (1990). *Kōga* [Pictures of Light]. Tokyo: Fukkokuban Kōga Kankōkai.
[46] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 31.
[47] Ina Nobuo ([1932] 2010). Shashin ni kaere [Return to Photography]. In: *Shashin ni Kaere, Collection of Mark Pearson*. *Zen Photo Gallery*, Vol. 9, p. 8.
[48] I rely on a translation of this paragraph, as per: Ibid.

However, the radicalism of 'new' photography according to Ina was not going any further than severing ties with other art forms, and most notably painting, whereas the main role he ascribed to photography remained in providing a record of lived reality. Produced by a mechanically operated apparatus, photography was situated within the new societal structures, first and foremost characterised by rapid industrialisation. The article symbolised the peak of 'new' photography and coincided with Shigane Kanamaru's *How to Make New Photography* (*Shinkō shashin no tsukurikata*, 1932), the first volume completely dedicated to its historiography, methodology and techniques.[49]

Regardless of Ina's call for severing ties with other art forms, 'new' photography established the medium not only as socially relevant but also as prone to artistic experiment, thus bringing it closer to the ideas and goals of Surrealism. Vanguard attitudes, reaching beyond the understanding of photography as a reliable record of reality, began crystallising simultaneously to its acceptance as a mainstream practice within activities of Kansai-based photography clubs.[50] These included the Ashiya Photo Club (*Ashiya Kamera Kurabu*) that was formed in the city of the same name near Kobe and the Tampei Photography Club (*Tampei Shashin Kurabu*) in Osaka that was set up as a branch of the Naniwa Photography Club, both established in 1930. Activities of the Ashiya club foresaw the impact of 'new' photography in such a manner that their first Tokyo exhibition in 1931, held at the same venue as *Film and Photo*, received higher praise than the latter from a critic Moriyoshi Taro in the June edition of the *Asahi Kamera*.[51] The club was established by

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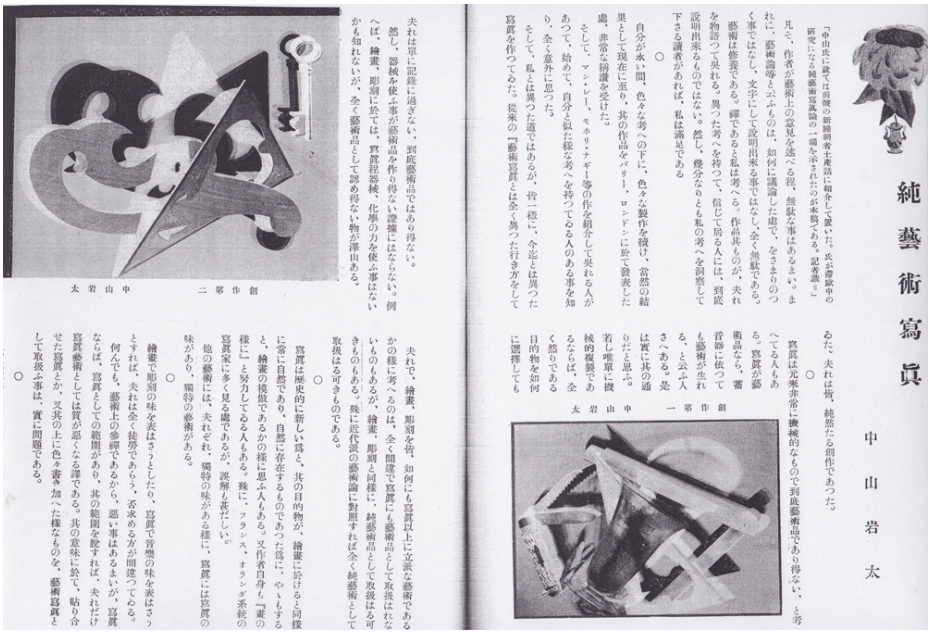
[49] Kanamaru Shigane (1932). *Shinkō shashin no tsukurikata* [How to Make New Photography]. Tokyo: Genkōsha.

[50] For how the New Photography Study Group was formed in response to the rise of 'new' photography in Osaka see: Kaneko, Ryūichi (2012). Biography of Horino Masao. In: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (ed.), *Vision of the Modernist: The Universe of Photography of Horino Masao* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, p. 7.

[51] Nishimura Tomohiro (2008). *Nihon geijutsu shashin shi: ukiyoe kara dejikame made* [History of Art Photography in Japan: From *Ukiyoe* to Digital Camera]. Kokubunji-shi, Bigaku Shuppan, p. 234. Ashiya Photo Club exhibited in Tokyo in April 1931 and simultaneously held the second exhibition of its club in Ashiya. On the occasion of the latter, Nakayama arranged four works by Man Ray to be exhibited. Although precise records of the works do not remain, three of these photographs are known to have been solarisations, as per: Ashiya Shiritsu Bijutsu Hakubutsukan (ed.) (1998). *Ashiya kamera kurabu 1930-1942: ashiya no bijutsu wo*

Nakayama, a professional photographer with experience of studio work in New York and Paris after his return to the country and included photographers such as Benitani Kichinosuke, Matsubara Jūzō and Hanaya Kanbei, who were to be active in the later *Kōga*. Nakayama's extensive knowledge of American and French photography and personal links with art circles abroad would establish Ashiya as one of the most advanced centres for artistic experimentation within 'new' photography.


純藝術寫眞

中山岩太

Figure 1.2: Nakayama Iwata, 'Pure Art Photography', *Asahi Kamera*, January 1928, detail.

As early as January 1928, Nakayama defined his interest in 'pure art photography' in an article published in the *Asahi Kamera*.[52] Accompanying the text with two of his own untitled photographs achieved with the photogram technique, Nakayama established how his work was developing alongside such well-known photographers as Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, whom he identified as artists of kindred orientation (Figure 1.2).[53]

Film and Photo also toured Osaka in July 1931. Yasui Nakaji, another well-established photographer in the region was later to describe his experience of

saguru [Ashiya Camera Club 1930-1942: Exploring the Beauty of Ashiya]. Ashiya: Ashiya Shiritsu Bijutsu Hakubutsukan, p. 7.

[52] Nakayama Iwata (1928). Jun geijutsu shashin [Pure Art Photography]. *Asahi Kamera,* Vol. 5, No., 1, p. 40.

[53] Ibid.

viewing the show as imprinting on his mind like nothing he had seen before.[54] His support for young photographers in Osaka would become equally important to his own practice, and would result in fostering some of the most radical approaches to photography throughout the decade. Koishi Kiyoshi was among such photographers of the young generation beginning their careers simultaneously with the rise of 'new' photography at the turn of the decade. To coincide with the Naniwa club's first Tokyo exhibition in 1932 he released the *Early Summer Nerves* (*Shoka shinkei*), a luxurious volume published in a large format and zinc binding that glorified photography pairing it with poetry and stylish design. As such, his approach to photography made clear an equal artistic aspiration to that of Nakayama, whereas their work at the time would be based on exploration of photogram and photomontage techniques.

Such activities of the Kansai-based photographers triggered a strong response from the capital Tokyo. A meeting held between the core members of the *Kōga*, reported on by Ina in its June 1933 edition, reflected on Koishi's pairing of photography with poetry as 'daring' whereas the work produced by the Ashiya club was understood as 'playful'.[55] In the same year, Ina followed these remarks with an article published in the October issue of the magazine in which he established how mechanically produced images cannot be considered art. [56] To Ina, even though new techniques such as photogram and photomontage allowed the use of photography towards artistic ends, those works could never have the same socially engaged role as 'normal' (*futsū*) photography. The essential problem embedded in such new techniques, for Ina, was the relationship between photography and reality,

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[54] Yasui Nakaji ([1941] 2001). Shashin no hattatsu to sono geijutsu-teki shōsō [Development of Photography and its Various Aspects]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 530.
[55] Ina Nobuo ([1933] 2000). 'Kōgakai' kiji [Article on '*Kōga* Meeting']. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 44-46.
[56] Ina Nobuo ([1933] 2000). Shashin kai he no kōkaijō (II) [An Open Letter Addressed to the Photography World (II)]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 48-50.

complicated by Dada and Surrealism.[57] Following these remarks, Yamawaki Iwao, a photographer trained at the Bauhaus who came back to Japan in 1930, summarised the work produced by Koishi and the members of the Ashiya club in that they 'ran the risk of indulging in eroticism and grotesque'.[58] This criticism was based on two separate articles in 1934. 'Is There Something Funny', published in the January edition of the *Asahi Kamera*, focused on Koishi's image of the same title and identified how photomontage technique is a 'play of sensation' (*kankaku no omocha*).[59]


何がをかしい
山脇巌
何がをかしい？小石清作
53

Figure 1.3: Yamawaki Iwao, 'Is There Something Funny', *Asahi Kamera*, January 1934.

With regard to the image, a composition of cut outs from female magazines, Yamawaki established how its effect was achieved in both the title and displacement of female portraits in the composition (Figure 1.3). He dismissed photomontage as producing a 'grotesque feeling' but praised the specific work

[57] Ibid, p. 49.
[58] As per: Takeba, Joe (2003). The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.), *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 148. I rely on Takeba's translation of this phrase.
[59] Yamawaki Iwao ([1934] 2001). Nanika okashii [Is There Something Funny]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 52.

for its successful attempt at producing a humorous result.[60] Following this article Yamawaki further elaborated the working of photomontage in 'Looking at Japanese Photomontage', in the April 1934 issue of the *Foto Taimusu,* where he extended his analysis of Koishi's work to the members of the Ashiya club in order to advance the problematic comment regarding their 'indulging' in eroticism and grotesque.[61]

Such criticism by Ina and Yamawaki reflected several simultaneous and interconnected cultural and political phenomena. Firstly, Yamawaki's commentary acknowledged the folding of popular city culture of the late 1920s and early 1930s, and referred to by a catch phrase 'erotic, grotesque, nonsense', with those practices of 'new' photography aspiring to an artistic expression. Secondly, the reference to the 'play of sensation' would at the time equate with Surrealism, insinuating a literary circle known as the New Sensibilities School, most strongly supporting European vanguard ideas and famously including Kawabata. The group also consisted of Kataoka Tappei and Yokomitsu Riichi and explored the sensory experience of modernist urban culture. Their best known project was a collaboration between Kawabata and a film director Kinugasa Teinosuke on the script for *A Page of Madness* (*Kurutta ipēji*, 1926), a quintessential modernist Japanese film of the 1920s in which the story develops around a janitor working in a mental asylum and is achieved with advanced montage and stunning visual effects. The group was also known to have experimented with 'free associations' only months after the publication of the *Manifesto of Surrealism*, making the effort to employ automatism in the practice of lens based media.[62]

The importance of the New Sensibilities School was affirmed in Koishi's response to Ina's and Yamawaki's criticism. This response also took place in two separate articles. 'Life's Toys' was published in the *Shashin Shinpō* (*Photography Newspaper*) in September 1934 and included ten photographs

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Yamawaki Iwao ([1934] 2001). Nihon no fotomontaju wo miru [Looking at Japanese Photomontage]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 53-60.
[62] Gardner, William O. (2004). New Perceptions: Kinugasa Teinosuke's Films and Japanese Modernism. *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 3, p. 67.

under a joint title *Daydream* (*Hakujitsumu*).[63] In this article, he commented how photography had recently become subject to criticism that it is detached from practice and how Tokyo critics indulge in a 'fragmented mechanical analysis'.[64] On the other hand, he described the series as not being as 'sensuously strong' as the previous *Early Summer Nerves* but that it equally contained 'narration, grotesque, slight nonsense and synthesis of unconscious sensation and conscious construction'.[65] In the second article, however, he became explicit that such intention originates in Surrealism. In 'Expressions of New Sensibility: Going Beyond Reality', published in the June 1935 issue of the *Kamera Āto* (*Camera Art*), he specifically wrote in response to Ina's and Yamawaki's texts, identifying how his work was recently described as 'poetic' and 'sensuous'.[66] He established the 'world of Surrealism' (*shūrurearizumu no sekai*) as an answer to photography's grounding in reality, which he understood as problematic due to the fact that its sole practice as 'reportage' inevitably led to propaganda.[67] To Koishi, the claim that photography was necessarily imbedded in reality due to its scientific nature was outdated and the practice needed to advance 'beyond reality'. In that regard he writes: **'**We need to individually expand sensibility of a free Surrealist world as that is where a promise of artistic possibility lies'.[68] Therefore, Koishi's deliberate referring to the grotesque and nonsensical, his siding with the New Sensibilities and recognition of Surrealism as the origin of his work positioned him in opposition to the main Tokyo critics of 'new' photography. Such positioning resulted from the fact that the most prominent figures in Tokyo, including Kimura and Ina, had by that time moved on to

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[63] Koishi Kiyoshi ([1934] 2001). Seimei no gangu [Life's Toys]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 61-67.
[64] Ibid, p. 63. I rely on a translation of the phrase, as per: Takeba, Joe (2003), p. 148.
[65] Koishi Kiyoshi ([1934] 2001), p. 65.
[66] Koishi Kiyoshi ([1935] 2001). Shinkankaku no hyōgen: rearizumu no kanata he [Expressions of New Sensibility: Going Beyond Reality]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 78-81.
[67] Ibid, p. 80.
[68] Ibid, p. 81.

focus on photojournalism, termed as *hōdō shashin*.[69] First introduced as a vanguard method of breaking away from the limiting faculties of the soft focused pictorialism, 'new' photography soon became a mainstream practice. In the five years between 1930 and Koishi's *Photography, a New Method for Image-Making* (*Satsue: Sakuga no shin giho*, 1936), a volume offering step by step explanations for the production of rayographs, photomontages, solarised images or images shot from bird and worm-eye perspectives, it was not only practised as an innocent pastime of amateur photographers but was rapidly becoming a favoured technique used for propaganda purposes by the rising militarist regime.[70]

The shift, juxtaposed with the change in foreign policies of the country from the support to Allied forces in the First World War to signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in 1936, reflected the change from the liberal 1920s to the rise of aggressive militarist government in the 1930s, that will lead up to colonial expansion and full scale military operations with the onset of the Pacific War.[71] The 'Manchurian Incident', the 'sabotaging' of part of a railway track near Mukden in Manchuria owned by the Japanese South-Manchuria Railway Company by middle-ranking Japanese officers in September 1931 served as a pretext for significant strengthening of military power and lead to Japan's annexation of the territory and establishment of the Republic of Manchukuo under Japan's rule in 1932.[72] The incident was to mark the beginning of the Fifteen Year War in Japan, ending in 1945. Enthusiasm propagated by the Empire towards the newly occupied territories on the continent found good use in the socially engaged role photography was ascribed with, as it became an intrinsic part of colonisation. Occupied territories were studied scientifically and Japanese authority was supposedly

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[69] For how by the time when *Film and Photo* toured in Japan the New Vision already started to lose credibility in Germany see: Morris Hambourg, Maria and Phillips, Christopher (1989), p. 93.
[70] Koishi Kiyoshi (1936). *Satsuei: sakuga no shin gihō* [Photography, New Method for Image-Making]. Tokyo.
[71] Henshall, Kenneth G. (1999). *A History of Japan, from Stone Age to Superpower*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 120.
[72] For how the incident was condemned by the League of Nations, resulting in Japan's withdrawal from the council, of which the country had been a founding member since 1920 see: Ibid, pp. 112-113.

bringing prosperity to the new regions under its rule.[73] Against a permanent 'state of emergency' (*hijōji*) proclaimed in the years following the Manchurian Incident, increased control of city culture - films, cafés, dance halls, and music revues - was enforced for protection of public morals but was in fact manifesting governmental suppression of freedom of thought.[74] Under such conditions, any reference to the catch phrase 'erotic, grotesque, nonsense' would be implicitly considered politically subversive. Koishi's response to Ina and Yamawaki was thus a criticism of photography's increasing use in propaganda, for which he offered a solution in an art practice grounded in Surrealism and enfolded with reterritorialised forms of cultural practices that would render them possible. The origin of his interest in Surrealism and especially photomontage, however, was not based on original Surrealist texts, but was established in relation to the work of Koga Harue. Koga's inclusion in the annual exhibition of the Second Division Society was quoted by Koishi as a direct influence on his work in 'Expressions of New Sensibility', including *Is There Something Funny?* (*Nanika okashii?*).[75] The reference to a Japanese Surrealist painter as a point of validation of Koishi's practice reveals the final point of relevance for the emergence of Surrealist photography in Japan, or its relation to not only simultaneously developing urban culture and 'new' photography but also Surrealist visual art.

As 'new' photography had its centre in Tokyo, the experimental approach of Kansai photographers would often escape the comprehension of Tokyo-based critics. 'New' photography claimed a severing of ties with other art forms and celebrated its mechanical features, distancing itself from multi-medial, hybrid experiments that combined photography and painting or photography and poetry. This situation was mainly based on different motivation in the practice of photography, with the socially relevant and commercial potential of photojournalism seen as paramount in the Tokyo

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[73] Low, Morris (2006). *Japan on Display: Photography and the Emperor*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 58-77.
[74] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 3. For how even children actively used the phrase 'state of emergency' by 1933 see: Ibid, p. 3.
[75] Koishi Kiyoshi ([1934] 2001), p. 80.

circles.[76] Such tensions between Tokyo and Kansai photographers involved in the emergence of Surrealist photography were equally forming between 'new' and art photography and were also manifesting as a division among photographers between professional and amateur, with the latter seen as prone to artistic experimentation. However, regardless of whether Surrealist photography was arriving at 'new' photography via personal insights into European movements as in the case of Nakayama or through an interest in Japanese Surrealist painters stressed by Koishi, it was claiming a role of politically relevant practice since its inception. The fact that its emergence cannot be positioned towards any single facet of recognised photographic categories of the time: 'new', art or photojournalistic photography, but equally maintains some relationship with all of them, establishes Surrealist photography to be strongly deterritorialised, as were those cultural practices that framed it within Japanese urban modernity. The term 'territorialisation' derives from psychoanalysis, and stands for a phase in an infant's development in which erogenous zones are valorised against parental care-giving.[77] The process of deterritorialisation is therefore 'a movement producing change', preventing sedimentation of a practice when enclosed in a single 'territory'.[78] In other words, although detachment from a single Surrealist group would be a consequence of deterritorialisation of Surrealism from the European context in Japan, the active character of this process would position Surrealist photography in relation to all 'major' categories of photography developing at the same time: equally those of 'new', art or photojournalist orientation. Such a multiple character would also be inscribed in its emergence, embedded in equally deterritorialised cultural processes from within which it would arise.

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[76] Takeba, Joe (2003), p.138.
[77] Holland, Eugene (1999). *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 19.
[78] For how the process is aiming to 'free up the fixed relations that contain a body all the while exposing it to new organizations' see: Parr, Adrian (2005). *The Deleuze Dictionary*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 67.

Diverging from majority

The complexity of the relationship between Surrealism and photography in Japan at the turn of the decade and its progression from ‘new’ photography towards explicitly Surrealist avant-garde art is best seen in the example of Ei-Kyū’s work, which was enabled by parallel developments in both. His writing about photography and photogram production was the first attempt at making use of photography as a Surrealist practice in Japan while his work was strongly embedded in the city culture of the day, making it visible not for the sake of documentation but as a means of art expression. Ei-Kyū did not only develop a sustained Surrealist practice within ‘new’ photography in the first part of the decade but also became a reference point for emerging ‘avant-garde’ photography (*zen’ei shashin*) by 1937.


MODERN PHOTO
SEC.

フオトグラムの
自由な制作のために

杉田秀夫

1

かつて日本に於ける第一番のフオトグラムの技術報告が本誌主幹木村專一氏の手によつてなされた。

それから一年は完全にすぎた。第一の制作者報告者があまりにも革命的でありすぎたせいか、第二の報告者第三の報告者はやういにあらはれない。それくらい我國の寫眞界に於て表面にフォトグラムは浮びあがらない。とはいえ、實行は藝術寫眞家達こそ問題にしないけれども實業的、商業的、廣告的寫眞界においてはその應用はなされんとしてゐる。いまからどしどしと進出するであらうことはあら

第 1 圖

Figure 1.4: Ei-Kyū, ‘For a Free Production of Photograms’, *Foto Taimusu*, February 1930.

The August 1930 edition of the *Foto Taimusu* featured a contribution from Hideo Sugita 'For a Free Production of Photograms' in the 'Modern Photo' column.[79] It was the first time Ei-Kyū wrote about photography and the first time he published his own work to accompany the text, still under his real name (Figure 1.4). Nineteen years old at the time, the artist had already been active in publishing art reviews and criticism for the magazines *Atelier* and *Mizue* since 1927. The writing coincided with his enrolment in a photography school run by the company Oriental, the publisher of the magazine, and was to be followed by another thirteen articles focusing on photography published between 1930 and 1932.[80]

Opening the article with a note saying how it had been exactly one year since the first photogram appeared in Japan in the same magazine, Ei-Kyū wrote from a background in fine arts, criticising photography's subordinate position to painting.[81] This position at the time was established in the fact that pictorialism, a predominant photographic practice of the 1920s, was still informing the photographic mainstream at the turn of the decade, with prominent figures including Fukuhara Shinzō. Its soft focus and romantic subject-matter echoed the realist approach of salon painting and triggered the questioning of photography's authentic features, especially at the moment when its mechanical properties started to be celebrated by the 'new' photography practitioners. In the article, Ei-Kyū also commented on impossibility of photography to free itself from its scientific origin, comparing it to a train that is always bound to run along its tracks.[82] To him, the photogram technique offered the medium a possibility of liberation from the boundaries immanent to its mechanical apparatus. He contextualised his own work published in the text as exemplary of such a free approach, which allowed him to make 'Surrealist compositions' from magazine cut outs. Four out of five

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[79] Hideo Sugita ([1930] 2001). Fotoguramu no jiyūna sesaku no tame ni [For a Free Production of Photograms]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 41-44.
[80] For a detailed biography of the artist see: Yamada Kōshun (1976). *Ei-Kyū: Hyōden to sakuhin* [Ei-Kyū: Critical Biography and Artworks]. Japan: Seiryūdō. For a list of all these articles with commentary see: Ibid, pp. 85-86.
[81] Hideo Sugita ([1930] 2001), p. 41.
[82] Ibid, p. 42.

images accompanying the text (including the image seen on the first page), examples of the 'Surrealist compositions', distinctly feature images of bare female legs, cut out from the popular press and exposed to light while placed on photosensitive paper. This feature resonates strongly with records of popular culture provided by the members of the News Sensibilities at the time, as bare legs would evoke the 'modern girl' and her urban appearance.

As an example of such records, writing a feature on female legs in 1926, Kataoka made a remark how they are most appreciated when in motion, exclaiming 'Onward! Dance! Legs! Legs! Legs!'[83] The connection between bare female legs and motion was associated with widely popular revue dancers and also celebrated by Kawabata. Writing on Casino Folies, he says how it displays 'eroticism and nonsense, and speed, and humour and the vein of the topical cartoon, the jazz songs, the legs'.[84] According to Silverberg, eroticism was often referred to in terms of 'a graphic rendering of female body parts' that would signify an immobilised 'woman as body-in-parts'.[85] Therefore, graphic renditions of an erotic encounter with a body in motion would originate in the experience of popular culture and offer means of voyeuristic appropriation. Although Ei-Kyū is clear and specific in his elaboration of photogram technique as a Surrealist method that allows him to transgress delimiting properties of photography, his imagination is imbedded in Japanese popular culture, a 'recoded' or reterritorialised modernity already underwritten with specific symbolical values and meanings in its Japanese context, similarly to Koishi.

For E-Kyū, however, the specific technique did not only allow the exploration of the liberating potential of photography's scientific origin, but also the displacement of content, upon which what he terms as 'Surrealist compositions' would finally emerge. He writes:

> What I would like to do is to expand a chemical freedom of the print achieved in the production of photograms […] Freedom exists even

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[83] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 53.
[84] Richie, Donald (2005). Forward. In: Kawabata, Yasunari ([1928] 2005). *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. xviii.
[85] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 111.

> when reduced to the print, but in order to make Surrealist compositions (*shūru rearistiku-na konpojon*) I have also freely used cut outs of female legs […].[86]

The 'free production' included in the title thus suggests a departure from photography's established relation to its signifier in reality and opening up of the image's elements to chance. It is not only the 'camera-less technique' but also the displacement of content that allows Ei-Kyū to achieve 'Surrealist compositions', as an example of his early experiments with automatism. Koishi's later description of his own project as 'a synthesis of unconscious sensation and conscious construction' would resonate with Ei-Kyū's methodology. In the text, he also attested how the free use of the material to achieve the content displacement might be considered an unorthodox approach to photogram production but that his interest was not aimed at furthering the technique. Rather, it was used as a means to achieve the specific delivery of 'Surrealist compositions' by deliberately choosing for himself the position of a 'stranger'.[87] Ei-Kyū thus managed to establish a unique approach to the production of photograms even within the first published text on photography by distancing himself from the mainstream and developing a specific technique that experimented with automatism in combining photogram production with elements of Surrealist collage as early as 1930.

The positioning of photography in the article against fine arts evokes Breton's *Surrealism and Painting* as both Breton and Ei-Kyū comment on the same delimiting boundaries of photography and both assign a possibility of setting it free against the potential of photogram production.[88] In the volume, an expanded compilation of previously published articles, Breton developed an argument concerning the position of visual image production in Surrealism with regard to Surrealist painters but also praised the photographic work of

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[86] Hideo Sugita ([1930] 2001), p. 43.
[87] Referred to in a loanword from French *étranger*, as per: Ibid.
[88] For how Ei Kyū's practice and writing related to photogram was juxtaposed with Breton's text and the fact that Japanese painters had by 1931 already started exhibiting in Surrealist style see: Ei-Kyū (et al.) (1997). *Ei Kyū, Sakuhin-shū* [Ei Kyū, Photography Compilation]. Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, p. 16.

Man Ray. The value of his photographs was placed within a suggestive power he manages to invest into the medium, rather than in the emotional charge related to its possibility of recording a passing moment.[89] In testament to the power of the Surrealist image, photographs ultimately unfaithful to reality were ascribed with a power of agency, of revealing surreality within the real and thus opening it up to experience. Breton regarded Man Ray's work as breaking down the 'positive nature' of photography as a document of an event and thus for 'forcing it to abandon its arrogant air and pretentious claims'.[90] The text, in its 1928 book version, also included two photograms by Man Ray.[91]

Famously, Man Ray's discovery of the technique that he named as 'Rayography' was pure accident, a consequence of turning the light on while having several random objects left on a wetted sheet of undeveloped photo paper in his hotel room in 1921.[92] Tristan Tzara, a resident of the same hotel as Man Ray, proclaimed such images pure Dada constructs and urged Man Ray to publish them the following August under a title *The Delightful Fields* (*Les Champs délicieux*, 1922), evoking Breton's and Soupault's *The Magnetic Fields* (*Les Champs magnétiques*, 1920). In the same manner as the latter was the first publication of automatic writing, Man Ray was aiming to produce the first volume of automatic photographs.[93] Automatism, or uncontrolled and unmediated access to the unconscious mind was an establishing characteristic of Surrealism as set out in the *Manifesto of Surrealism*. The complex concept drew on French psychiatry as well as Freud's psychoanalytic theory to frame the interest of Surrealists in accessing

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[89] Breton, André ([1928] 1972). *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: Harper and Row, p. 32.
[90] This note is followed by the famous question: 'When will all the books that are worth anything stop being illustrated with drawings and appear only with photographs?', as per: Ibid.
[91] See: Breton, André ([1930] 1991). *Chōgenjitsushugi to kaiga (Andore Buruton*) [Surrealism and Painting (André Breton)]. Translated by Takiguchi Shūzō. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Ōoka Makoto (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Senzen senchūhen 1: 1926-1936* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Prewar and War Period 1, 1926-1936]. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, pp. 181-220. For a reference to Man Ray in this translation see: Ibid. pp. 109-212. Ei-Kyū would not necessarily rely on Takiguchi's translation for his knowledge of Surrealist texts.
[92] Schwartz, Arturo (1977). *Man Ray, The Rigour of Imagination*. New York: Rizzoli, p. 236.
[93] Ibid, p. 237.

uncontrolled, unconscious, child-like and dreaming states of mind.[94] The idea of automatic writing was embedded in Breton's wartime experiences, taking place during his medico-psychiatric training. It evoked the type of mental treatment that encouraged patients in their uncontrolled and spontaneous monologues, to which Breton was exposed during a time spent at the Saint-Dizier clinic in 1916.[95] However, as the practice of automatism was first actualised in writing, it opened up a space for questioning the existence of Surrealist painting.[96] Under such circumstances, Man Ray's publication can be understood as an early form of affirming the possibility of extending the application of automatism in photographic image production, subsequently receiving Breton's recognition.

The link between automatism and photography was made explicit by Breton in a preface to a catalogue of an exhibition of Ernst's works in 1920, where he compared automatism in poetry to photography of thought.[97] In Surrealism, both verbal and graphic automatisms are aimed at intervention of chance as a means of going against the limits of the reasoning mind.[98] The uncontrolled process proposes to transcend its boundaries and bring to the domain of the visual that which is unknown, previously unseen. It makes visible, or in Éluard's terms 'brings to vision' (*donner à voir*) unconscious processes of the mind, dreaming states and eruptions of the marvellous in the everyday.[99] As Margaret Iversen noted, photography's ability to record the process of thought is precisely what constitutes photography's potential as a Surrealist technique. For Iversen, similarly to the automatic drawings by André Masson and frottages produced by Ernst, 'the process precedes and determines the

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[94] Poling, Clark V. (2008). *André Masson and the Surrealist Self*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 43.
[95] Gascoyne, David ([1920] 1997). Introduction. In: Breton, André; Éluard, Paul; Soupault, Phillipe ([1933, 1920, 1930] 1997). *The Automatic Message; The Magnetic Fields; The Immaculate Conception*. Translated by David Gascoyne, Antony Melville and Jon Graham. Introduced by David Gascoyne and Antony Melville. London: Atlas Press, p. 43.
[96] For a detailed account see: Bate, David (2003). *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, p. 73.
[97] Breton, André ([1920] 1978). Max Ernst. In: Rosemont, Franklin (ed.), *What is Surrealism? : Selected Writings*. New York: Monad. Distributed by Pathfinder Press, pp. 15-16.
[98] Matthews, J H. (1977). *The Imagery of Surrealism*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, p. 129.
[99] Jay, Martin (1993). *Downcast Eyes: the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 242.

image' as exploration of chance procedure in photography as well.[100] David Bate added to this argument claiming how it was in the 'state of mind' during the process of recording and not in the 'process of recording itself' where the 'automatic image' would have appeared in Surrealist theory, and henceforth in Surrealist painting, or photography.[101] Bate also asserted how photography, or in this case rayography, would not be different from other visual forms of art aimed at producing the 'automatic image' in Surrealism.[102] However, as a process, rayographs would highlight contingency immanent to photography, which in return spotlights the ultimate contingency also immanent in perception of reality. Contingency, or performative character of reality, is especially revealed in Surrealist photography, becoming to the visible what automatic writing is to the invisible.[103] The New Sensibilities School attested to knowledge and practice of automatism soon after the publication of the *Manifesto* whereas the setting of *The Page of Madness* in a mental asylum can be considered as homage to the psychiatric origin of the method. Ei-Kyū's initial work shows the same fascination with movement and speed as favoured by the school. However, his insistence on freeing photography from both its dependence on camera apparatus and treatment of the content in relation to reality affirms an interest in applying the methodology of automatism as a purely Surrealist technique. A 'free' production of photograms would thus be aimed at the same liberation of the mind intended within Surrealism by means of all cultural artefacts, including photography.

This intention becomes clear in another article published in the December 1931 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*.[104] On this occasion, Ei-Kyū commented on the fact that although photograms were becoming increasingly popular in

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[100] Iversen, Margaret (2010). Introduction, The Aesthetics of Chance. In: Iversen, Margaret (ed.), *Chance*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 23.
[101] Bate, David (2003), pp. 81-82.
[102] Ibid, p. 80.
[103] As argued by Hollier, Denis (1997). Surrealist Precipitates: Shadows Don't Cast Shadows. In: Krauss, Rosalind (et al.), *October, The Second Decade, 1986-1996*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 16.
[104] Hideo Sugita ([1931] 2001). Fotoguramu wa ikani zenshin subeki ka - Fotoguramu shisaku hōkoku [Are Photograms Bound to Progress: Reporting on Trial Manufacture of Photograms]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 52-56.

Japan, different artists made varied use of them for reasons different to those suggested by Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy, who first elaborated the technique.[105] Indeed, by the time *Film and Photo* toured Japan in 1931, the technique had become widely practised.[106] However, as Ei-Kyū had deliberately placed himself into the marginalised position of a 'stranger', the comment foregrounds the difference with his own approach to the technique. Namely, although his early work was termed as rayography and published in a photographic magazine, the method that Ei-Kyū was developing was based on more than placing objects on photosensitive material and exposing them to light. His work combined photogram technique with collage, using cut outs from the illustrated press to achieve a displaced effect of the final works with an aim of producing Surrealist compositions. Ei-Kyū's decision to develop his work through the particular combination of collage and photogram techniques points out how the final end for experimenting with found images sourced in the popular press was to utilise the camera apparatus 'in the service of Surrealism', exploring photography's potential to bring to the vision thought processes invested in the creation of images by investigating states of dreaming and unconscious. In pursuing this goal for his practice, Ei-Kyū was not only relying on the original Surrealist texts or their translations into Japanese but also on the practice of Surrealist painters in Japan, such as Koga and Fukuzawa Ichirō. In a text published in the December 1927 issue of the *Atelier* he made his appreciation of Koga's work evident, celebrating his painting for showing 'a dream of future'.[107] This preference would also be related to the New Sensibilities, as Koga was a close associate of the group. After his premature death in 1933, Ei-Kyū's high regard for the work of Fukuzawa was also made clear in a letter to a close friend and later

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[105] Ibid, p. 52.
[106] At least Shōji Ueda and Shiiharu Osamu experimented with the technique as early as 1930, whereas the number of photograms published in the *Asahi Kamera* in the same year also attests to this fact**.** There is not much written record about Shōji's relation to Surrealism at the time. Curator at The Shōji Ueda Museum of Photography (Tottori, Japan) Kitase Kazuo stressed in an interview with the author on September 30, 2011 how he based his knowledge of photography on whichever magazine he could acquire in that remote part of the country and experimented with anything 'new' that appeared interesting to him. Shiiharu Osamu was working in relation to Surrealism through his involvement with Osaka based photography clubs, the subject of Chapter 3.
[107] Yamada Kōshun (1976), p. 76.

biographer Yamada Kōshun in 1935. In this letter, he attested to how he made a daily effort of reading the *Cahiers d'art* wishing to know more about Surrealism.[108] He also evaluated Fukuzawa's 'designs' (*dessin*) as the best achieved practice of Surrealism in the visual arts of Japan and made a remark that the newness of his approach was yet to be appreciated in the country.[109] Both Koga and Fukuzawa used the illustrated press in their work, becoming the chief source of inspiration for Ei-Kyū.[110]

His frustration at how the works of Japanese Surrealist painters were not adequately perceived in the country inspired Ei-Kyū to draft an ambitious monograph on Koga in the same year. However, not able to express himself adequately in writing, this project would result in a more focused image production and his debut under the name of Ei-Kyū in 1936.[111] His debut exhibition and collection of works were titled *Reason for Sleep* (*Nemuri no riyū*), indicating dreams or the unconscious state of the mind as the origin of his production. The collection, fully titled in French as *Reason for Sleep, Photo-designs by Ei-Kyū, Album 1* (*Raison du sommeil*, *Photo-dessin par Q.Ei, Album 1*) was published in forty copies, simultaneously with an exhibition in Tokyo held under the Japanese title in April 1936.[112]

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[108] Ibid, p. 115.
[109] Ibid.
[110] For the extent to which Koga Harue was using the illustrated press of the time see: Hayami Yutaka (2009). *Shuruearisumu no kaiga to nihon: imēji no juyō to sōzō* [Surrealist Painting and Japan: Image Reception and Creation]. Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, pp. 47-141. For Fukuzawa's work see: Ibid, pp. 142-211. For more details about Fukuzawa's use of the illustrated press see: Ōtani Shōgō (1996). Ichiro Fukuzawa and Collage: A Japanese Artist's Adoption of Surrealism in the Early 1930s. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Modern Art*, No. 5, pp. 55-76.
[111] Yamada Kōshun (1976), p. 119.
[112] Ei-Kyū (et al.) (1997), p. 3.

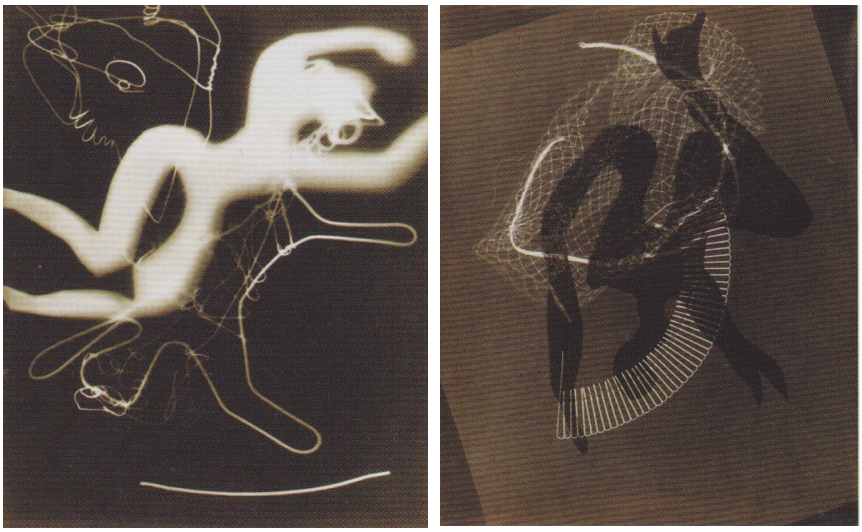

Figure 1.5: Ei-Kyū, from *Reason for Sleep*, 1936.

Both the title of the exhibition and the artist's new name were godfathered by established figures in the Tokyo art world Hasegawa Saburō and Usaburo Toyama, whom the artist approached after producing around a hundred works in a period of several months towards the end of 1935.[113] Following the debut in Tokyo, the exhibition was also seen in Osaka and Ei-Kyū's native Miyazaki in the same year. The exposure to the public drove him to produce another hundred or so images and gave Ei-Kyū the opportunity to meet with the most prominent avant-garde artists and critics of the time, including Takiguchi, Yoshihara Jirō and Kurt Seligmann, who had just had an exhibition at Tokyo's *Mitsukoshi* department store in the previous year.[114] Ten works included in the collection showed development of the same project initiated at the turn of the decade, representations of the human figure achieved by combining photogram and collage techniques (Figure 1.5). However, the collection also included multi medial designs that mixed photography, photogram, collage and drawing. As the compilation only offered a small selection of Ei-Kyū's entire production, his specific interest in the latter is also evident in other works, published or shown individually.

[113] Hasegawa Saburō, primarily an abstract artist who had returned from his studies in France in 1932 was active in art circles of the capital and introduced Ei-Kyū to Usaburo Toyama, a prominent art critic of the time after a visit he made to his studio.
[114] Yamada Kōshun (1976), pp. 124-125.

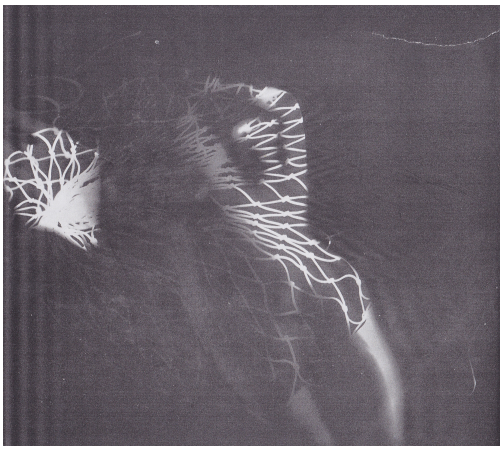

Figure 1.6: Ei-Kyū, from *Reason for Sleep*, 1936.

Figure 1.7: Ei-Kyū, *Dancer in Dusk*, 1936.

For example, a separate photo-design accompanied a text published in the July 1936 issue of the *Home Life* closely resembles his work from the collection in the use of abstracted cut outs together with a wired structure covering the largest part of the print's surface. Whereas a clear indication of the anthropomorphic form is lost in these images, the title of the later *Dancer in Dusk* (*Tasogare no odoriko*) suggests how the curved abstracted shape seen in part of the series should be read as a human figure, transformed not only by the ambiguous cut out but by juxtaposition with other elements of the image (Figure 1.7). In the article published alongside the image, Ei-Kyū reaffirmed modern urban culture as an origin of his work, claiming how new methods of expression were necessarily required to respond to the new modes of living imposed by the electric trains and neon signs of city life.[115]

[115] Ei-Kyū (1936). Gendai seikatsu to hikari to kage to: foto dessan no sakusha to shite no kansō [Modern Life, Light and Shadow: Impressions of a Photo-Design's Creator]. *Home Life*, Vol. 2, No. 8, p. 28.

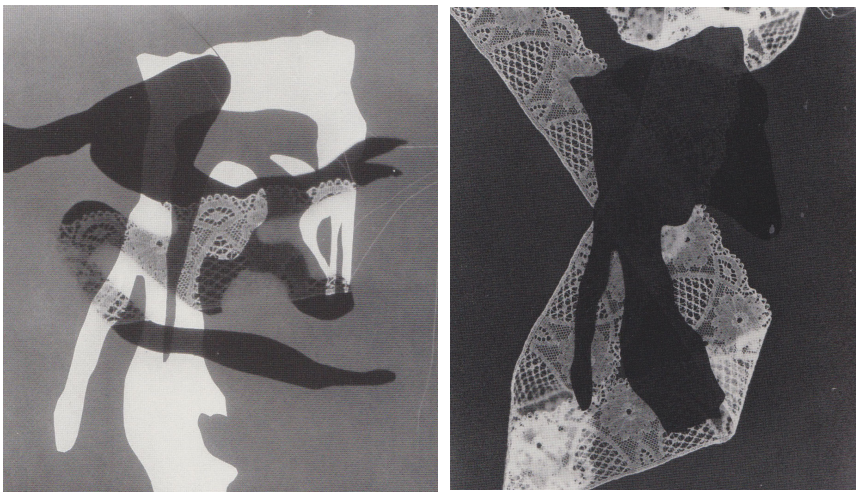

Figure 1.8: Ei-Kyū, from *Reason for Sleep*, 1936.

Figure 1.9: Ei-Kyū, *Work 6*, 1937.

However, whereas his earlier production would explore iconographical motifs visualising such culture, the new work would further part with representation, often not providing any clues to potential reading of the images. For example, the same methodology of combining abstract cut outs with pieces of lace as deployed in the *Reason for Sleep* (Figure 1.8) is seen in the later *Work 6* (Figure 1.9). However, most of the designs produced after the album would simply be titled by numbers, leaving possible interpretation entirely to the viewer.

With the *Reason for Sleep* Ei-Kyū thus established not only his name but also a specific place in photogram production, calling his images 'photo designs'. The Surrealist origin of the production was not only suggested in the title of the exhibition and the accompanying collection but also in the working process, in which Ei-Kyū deliberately made his designs without much thinking, in intense and short periods of time, suggesting automatism as a primary method. In the aftermath of the exhibition, initial collection and the change of name in 1936, his work would become a clear point of reference for artists seeking to deploy the same method. This is exemplified in Hanawa Gingo's 'Photogram' published in a special volume of the *Asahi Kamera* in 1937.[116]

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[116] Hanawa Gingo (1937). Photoguramu [Photogram]. In: *Asahi Shimbun* (ed.), *Asahi Kamera rinji sokan: saishin no shashin chishiki* [*Asahi Kamera* Special Issue: the Latest Knowledge in Photography]. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, pp. 8-10.

Following a recent exhibition of the Naniwa club, Hanawa established Ei-Kyū's work as a definitive point of reference leading experimentation in the technique alongside Nakayama, and included his own and Koishi's work in the text to exemplify some of the latest achievements. Although it offers a significant testament to the embracing of radical approaches in 'new' photography in the Kansai region, Hanawa's text did not make clear the relevance of Surrealism in those experiments. The final elaboration of the process behind the production of photo-designs can thus be found in Ei-Kyū's 'On Reality', published in the June 1937 issue of the *Atelier*.[117] The article, expressing a strong criticism of the Japanese art world of the time, rejected the standardised measures it enforced on art works and its understanding of art production as detached from the praxis of life.[118] He also described the automatic process behind production of his photo-designs as characterised by a contingent moment in which they were made, outside of any conscious control.[119] For Ei-Kyū, there was nothing particular in photogram as a technique, which he insisted could be used in advertising purposes as well as is in any other. [120] He questioned the mechanical premises of the photographic apparatus celebrated in 'new' photography by the critics such as Ina, saying how the realisation of the dream of flying 'may be limited to a fairy tale'.[121] Henceforth, the text affirmed a conscious application of automatism by ascribing to art the ultimate goal of 'realising reality beyond the conscious conclusions of thinking'.[122]

Ei-Kyū's first experiments in photogram technique coincided with the development of 'new' photography and its establishment as a mainstream practice. As a student of the Oriental school, publisher of the *Foto Taimusu*,

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[117] Ei-Kyū ([1937] 2001). Genjitsu ni tsuite [On Reality]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 101-104.
[118] Assigning greater understanding of his artwork to ordinary people, who grasped it instinctively and needed no definition and elaboration to experience it, as per: Ibid, p. 101.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Technology is understood as 'nothing but a cast-off skin of the forms of expression practised by primitive men in pre-historical time'. It is the 'nature of expression' that should be of concern rather than the issue of technology, as per: Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ei-Kyū ([1937] 2001), p. 103.

his early practice was directly linked to the activities of the New Photography Study Group and was published in the 'Modern Photo' section that promoted 'new' photography at the time.[123] However, he was equally interested in Surrealism, practising automatism in experimenting with photo-designs, investigating the state of dreams as an important catalyst for production of images and expressing the same attitudes towards delimiting understanding of photography as in Breton's *Surrealism and Painting*. His *Reason for Sleep* was propelled not only by experiments he would have made earlier in his career or in relation to translations of Surrealist texts that were appearing in Japanese, but rather within a dispersed network of Japanese Surrealists and especially in relation to Koga's work. As a result, the accompanying publication to his debut exhibition became the first complete volume of avant-garde photography produced in the country.[124] The June 1937 special volume of the *Atelier* confirmed his positioning as a definitive point of reference for photographers developing an avant-garde aspiration from within 'new' photography. His 'On Reality' affirmed deliberate use of automatism as a method deployed in his work in a volume entitled 'Research and Criticism of Avant-Garde Painting' (*Zen'ei kaiga no kenkyū to hihan*). Therefore, Ei-Kyū's work in the first part of the 1930s would not only draw from' new' photography and Surrealist visual art but would also announce the rise of a specific form of avant-garde photography developing in relation to Surrealism in the later part of the decade. Whereas the Surrealist character of this avant-garde practice will be discussed in the following chapter, Ei-Kyū's early production cuts through the main events of the first half of the decade and is strongly resonant with Koishi's work both in descriptions of their individual projects and in inspiration drawn from Koga. As such, they can be seen as an example of how the knowledge of Surrealism among photographers of the time was entwined both with the latest achievements in photographic technology as well as with Surrealist painting in the circumstances where both were arriving in Japan under a category of 'newness'.

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[123] Iizawa, Kōtarō (1988), p. 49.
[124] Notes to Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001), p. 152.

Although 'new' photography aspired to this category, driven by the promises of the liberal 1920s, it shifted its direction by getting caught in the ideological apparatus as the decade progressed. This was caused by the fact that the 'new' was part of a discourse formulated in the mass media of the time, with a principal commodity being the 'making of eventfulness' or substitution of concurrent fragmentation and destabilisation of traditional cultural forms.[125] In other words, although governmental authority during the early 1920s supported liberal thought, the change of policies at the turn of the decade made use of the modern fascination with speed and machinery to bring forth a war mentality.[126] Concerns with regard to the partiality of the Japanese experience of modernism rose simultaneously to its unquestionable celebration and this tension reflected the division between the orthodox and artistic practitioners of 'new' photography. Similar to the previous divisions among leftist writers or literary Surrealists, the fracturing of photography was grounded in a gradual oppression of the freedom of thought. On the side of radical, or artistic approaches, it manifested a need for visualising the complex experience of Japanese modernity, as the everyday was becoming gradually territorialised by militarist propaganda. Production of these types of photographs, interested in renegotiating the forms of urban occupation and exemplified in the cases of Nakayama, Koishi and Ei-Kyū can be thus understood in parallel to the function of automatism. Making visible what was otherwise unseen and seeking means to liberate the mind, they can be considered as introducing the potential of Surrealism to the practice of photography in Japan in the 1930s, and as points of origin of the minor history of Surrealist photography in the country. Against such a background, their works can be seen as examples of a process of 'diverging from majority', as a characteristic of a minor force.[127] Visualising alternative modes of experience to those suggested by the standardised visual culture, this divergence shouldn't be seen as only interested in the realisation of personal agendas but as essentially an act of refusal to participate in the programme of

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[125] Harootunian, Harry D. (2000), p. 116.
[126] Eckersall, Peter (2006). From Liminality to Ideology: The Politics of Embodiment in Prewar Avant-Garde Theatre in Japan. In: Harding, James and Rouse, John (eds.), *Not the Other Avant-Garde*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 231.
[127] Parr, Adrian (2005), p. 75.

mechanisation and intensified control of every segment of life already in force in the first part of the decade.

Chapter 2

'Photo Avant-Garde': Between what is no longer and what is not yet

At the beginning of the 1930s amateur photo clubs in Japan favoured highly 'new' photography and advanced it to the level of mainstream. However, as photojournalism started becoming a prevalent professional practice, the clubs became the main outlets of 'avant-garde' photography, designated as *zen'ei shashin*. Their activities were directly informed by literary Surrealism as well as by exhibitions of Surrealist art in 1932 and 1937.[1] All of the clubs formed in 1937 would use the word 'avant-garde' in their titles an can thus be considered as a coherent 'photo avant-garde'.[2] This 'photo avant-garde' was detached from both mainstream photography and orthodox Surrealism, and occupied a liminal and artificially constructed space. As much as it enabled the discursive practice of Surrealist photography, it compromised its revolutionary potential by claiming an apolitical position. Therefore, it would be incapable of fostering a coherent history of Surrealist photography, affirming its position as a minor force. However, this context would allow it a presence in the mass media, from where it would actualise its potential as a form of new visual thinking.

Firstly, this chapter establishes the specific meaning of the word 'avant-garde' with regard to Surrealism in the circumstances where its connotation of the Communist thought would not have been tolerated by the state censorship. It follows to introduce the main amateur photo clubs forming in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya and the main critical voices of those clubs. It argues that they should be understood as interconnected with each other and proposes that such an interconnected, minor historical force was made visible and operational through their presence in the illustrated press.

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[1] Minami Hiroshi (1982). *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyū: shisō, seikatsu, bunka* [Research into Japanese Modernism: Thought, Life, Culture]. Tokyo: Burēn Shuppan, p. 227.
[2] I use the term 'photo avant-garde' as per: Yamada Satoshi (1990). Foto-abangyarudo no dōkō [Tendency of a Photo Avant-Garde]. In: Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.), *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, pp. 178-179.

Exhibitions of Surrealist art and the legacy of avant-garde

In 1932 André Breton and André Salmon helped organise an exhibition of avant-garde painting titled *Exhibition of the Confederation of Avant-Garde Artists, Paris-Toky*o (*Exposition de la confédération des artistes d'avant-garde, Paris-Tokio*) with the works by Giorgio De Chirico, Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, André Masson, Hans Arp and Man Ray, which was the first opportunity to view Surrealist painting in Japan. In Japanese, the exhibition was titled *Exhibition of New Art in Paris and Tokyo* (*Pari Tokyo shinkō bijutsuten*) and was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (established in 1926).[3] It featured a total of 116 works by fifty-six artists, coming from different backgrounds including Cubism, Realism, Neo-Naturalism and Surrealism.[4] After the show in Tokyo, it toured in Osaka, Nagoya, Kyoto and Fukuoka. The exhibition resulted from the foundation of the Association of Avant-Garde Artists, Paris-Tokyo (*Association de Artistes D'avant-Garde Paris-Tokio*) set up between a Japanese painter Minegishi Giichi, Salmon and Pablo Picasso in 1929, during Minegishi's stay in Paris.[5] On the Japanese side, twenty-four artists exhibited thirty-six works of art, including two photographs by Nakayama Iwata.[6] The catalogue of the exhibition, printed in February 1933, included information on the 'Surrealist school' together with details of the Association's establishment. However, as the Surrealist works

[3] The exhibition run for two weeks between December 6-20. For details of the exhibition see: Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 477. See also: Moriguchi Tari (1934). *Pari shinkō kaiga senshū* [Collection of New Art in Paris]. Tokyo: Heibonsha.
[4] Surrealist part comprised thirty-one works by fifteen different artists, as per: Ibid.
[5] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990), p. 50.
[6] Titles of the two works are listed as *Composition 1* (*Konpojishon 1*) and *Composition 2* (*Konpojishon 2*), as per: Ibid, p. 478. They are difficult to locate as Nakayama produced a number of photographs with this title in the same period, as per: Nakayama Iwata (2003). *Nakayama Iwata: Modern Photography* (Exh. Cat.). Ashiya Shiritsu Bijutsu Hakubutsukan; Kyoto-shi: Tankōsha, pp. 305-306. An untitled work published in 1928 as an example two and seen in Figure 1.2 is listed as dating from 1932 in this catalogue.

were incorporated in a larger avant-garde context, the exhibition did not make clear the distinctive features of Surrealist painting.[7]

The difficulty of registering clearly the concept of 'avant-garde' in Japanese was affirmed in the difference of the exhibition titles in French and Japanese, the latter containing the word 'new' (*shinkō*) instead of the 'avant-garde'. The term 'avant-garde' was adopted in Japanese either as *zen'ei* or by a loanword *abangyarudo*. In Japanese, it would have been highly politically charged from inception, which becomes apparent in a subtle differentiation of the meaning between the two. The term in Japanese had a strong relation with a Marxist-Leninist conception of proletarian vanguard as developed by the members of the Japanese Communist Party while the loanword mostly stood for artistic movements and styles.[8] However, although the loanword intended to distinguish the new artistic practices developing in the 1930s from the proletarian art and literature, the distinction was never clear-cut and precisely defined. For instance, regardless of the title under which the exhibition toured the country in Japanese (as *shinkō*), the daily press reported on the show using the word 'avant-garde' (*zen'ei*).[9] The exhibition also marked an indecisive merging of photographic and art practices under this ambiguous notion. This was signalled by the inclusion of Nakayama in the exhibition, as a gesture validating 'new' photography, but simultaneously pointing to the affirmation of the medium as an art practice within the concept of 'avant-garde'. Whereas the exhibition would make a distinct impact on the development of Surrealist art, the term 'avant-garde' would not register widely

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[7] Pari Tokyo shinkō bijutsu tenrankai mokuroku [Catalogue of the Exhibition of New Art in Paris and Tokyo] ([1933] 2001). In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 151-174. The catalogue contained selected reproductions, list of works, a number of texts and biographical details of the artists. Details of the 'Surrealist school' (*Chōgenjitsu-ha*) were provided on pages 6-7, as per: Ibid, pp. 158-159.

[8] Furuhata, Yuriko (2009). Refiguring Actuality: Japan's Film Theory and Avant-Garde Documentary Movement, 1950s-1960s. PhD thesis, Brown University, p. 15. For a detailed discussion about the division between political and aesthetic vanguard circles see: Namigata Tsuyoshi (2005). *Ekkyō no avangyarudo* [Border-Crossing Avant-Garde]. Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, pp. 33-37.

[9] Gen Adachi (2012). *Zen'ei no idenshi: Anakizumu kara sengo bijutsu made* [Memes of the Japanese Avant-Garde: from Anarchism to Postwar Art]. Kunitachi: Buryukke, pp. 173-176. It would be both *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* that reported on the exhibition under such terms.

with regard to photography during the first half of the decade, when the 'newness' of 'new' photography would already suggest radical approaches to the practice.[10] A decisive change in this regard took place in the June 1937 volume of the *Atelier* magazine.

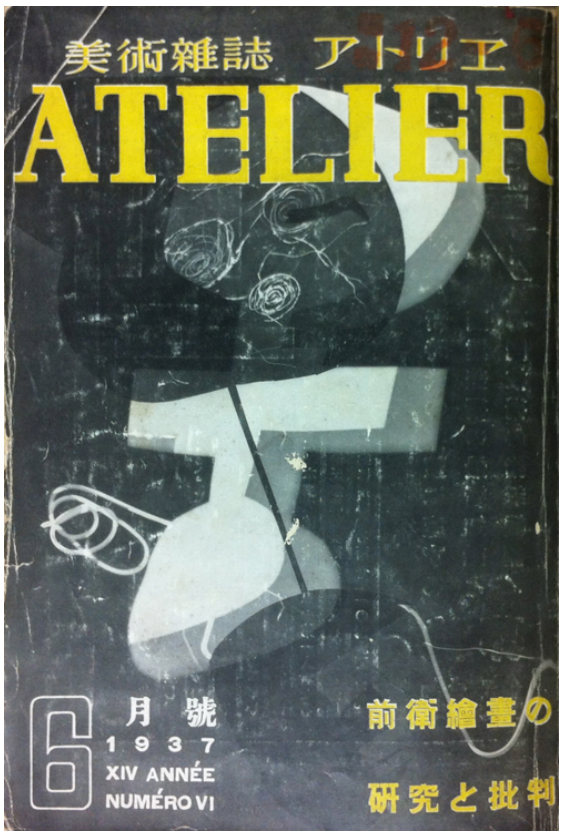

Figure 2.1: Ei-Kyū, *Untitled*, *Atelier*, June 1937, cover page.

The volume pointed out a specific position of the 'avant-garde' context as strongly indicating a Surrealist content but also prominently featured photography. Dedicated to the 'Research and Criticism of Avant-Garde Painting', the volume featured one of Ei-Kyū's photo-designs on the cover (Figure 2.1). Alongside his article 'On Reality', it also included writings by the most prominent critics of the time such as Fukuzawa Ichirō, Hasegawa Saburō and Takiguchi Shūzō. The volume also included a translation of a catalogue text for the *Cubism and Abstract Art*, curated by Alfred Barr at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936 and thus also attested to the

[10] For a detailed discussion on the impact of the exhibition see: Munro, Majella (2012). *Communicating Vessels: the Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-1970*. Cambridge: Enzo Press, pp. 66-72.

merging of Surrealist and abstract tendencies under the notion of 'avant-garde'.[11] However, regardless of the formal title of the volume and the discussion developing in the texts, Surrealist works took up a significant majority of the reproductions published in the introductory feature, more than twenty-five pages long and encompassing over fifty works in painting, sculpture and photography. Surrealist artists featured included Salvador Dalí, Alberto Giacometti, René Magritte, Jean Miró, Roland Penrose, Arp, Breton, De-Chirico and Ernst, who were presented alongside Japanese Surrealist artists such as Okamoto Tarō. Photography was included in the first part of the feature with reproductions of works by Hans Bellmer, Man Ray and Brassaï and was the main focus of its second part.

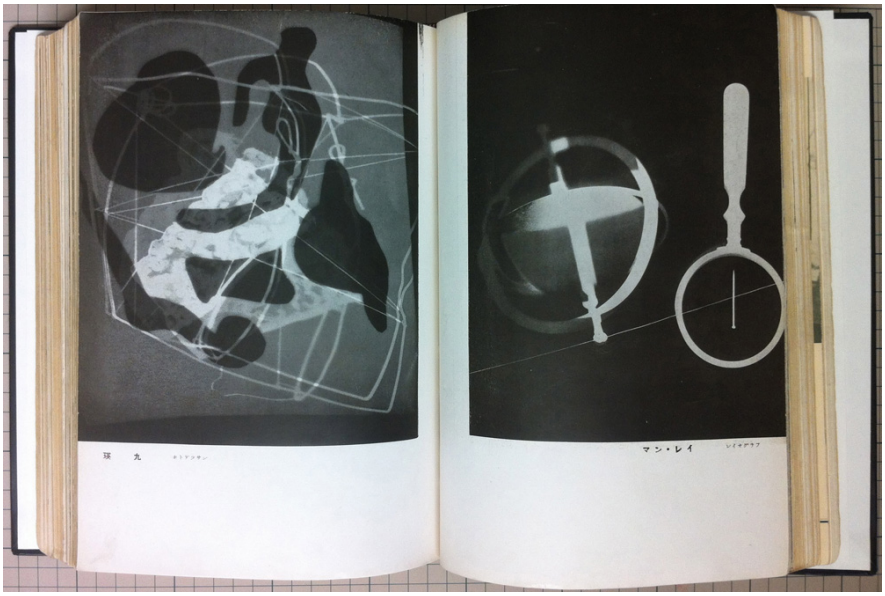

Figure 2.2: Ei-Kyū, *Photo Design* and Man Ray, *Rayograph*, *Atelier*, June 1937, detail.

The second part opened with six photographs by Man Ray that were followed with a single photogram, juxtaposed on the same magazine spread with a photo-design by Ei-Kyū (Figure 2.2). Another two images by Ei-Kyū on the following page were contrasted with two photographs by Mori Jirō, introduced above the images as a photographer who left for New York in 1928 and was based in Paris. The feature closed with a well-known view of a butterfly by

[11] For a description of the volume see: Omuka Toshiharu (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 2: Shūrurearisumu no bijutsu to hihyō* [Collection Surrealism in Japan 2: Surrealist Art and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 397-398.

Brassaï titled simply as *Photograph* (*Shashin*) and a straight shot of objects arranged on a beach titled *Seashore* (*Kaihin*) by Katsuo Junichirō, an artist belonging to the Free Artists' Association (*Jiyū Bijutsuka Kyōkai*).

The opening feature therefore made several important claims. Firstly, it made clear that 'avant-garde' from the title was directly connoting Surrealist artists, with 'Surrealist avant-garde' being its implied and underwritten meaning. This claim was strengthened in the following feature titled in French as 'Avant-Garde Artists' (*Les Artistes D'Avant-Garde*) and introducing the readership to the work of eleven different artists across six pages.[12] Again, the majority of the artists came from Surrealism: Dalí, Breton, Okamoto, Miró, Tanguy, Arp, Paul Nash, Ernst, Man Ray and Henry Moore, whereas the English painter Ben Nicholson offered the only example of the abstract 'avant-garde' tendency. Secondly, the feature established an equal relevance for Japanese artists and photographers within such a 'Surrealist avant-garde'. Ei-Kyū's works in particular, featured on the cover of the magazine and placed on equal basis alongside Man Ray's photogram made clear that the artist was becoming a definitive point of reference for the intersection between Surrealist painting and photography.[13] Finally, the feature also established photography as a significant form of the 'avant-garde' production, with a large part dedicated solely to the medium. The closing page of the feature that showed Katsuo's *Seashore* alongside Brassaï's photograph of a butterfly should also be noted as of relevance, attesting to how a straight shot would equally be accredited in this category.

The June 1937 edition of the *Atelier* coincided with the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* (*Kaigai chōgenjitsushugi sakuhinten*) that took place at the Tokyo's *Japan Salon* (*Nihon saron*) in the same month.[14] Including Paul Éluard, Georges Hugnet and Penrose on the board of organisers, the exhibition was a fruition of efforts to develop closer links between Surrealism

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[12] Les Artistes D'Avant-Garde (1937). *Atelier*, Year XIV, No. 6, unpaginated.
[13] For how the specific volume was of key importance to Ei-Kyū's career see: Yamada Kōshun (1976). *Ei-Kyū: Hyōden to sakuhin* [Ei-Kyū: Critical Biography and Artworks]. Japan: Seiryūdō, p. 156.
[14] In Tokyo, the exhibition took place between June 10-14, as per: Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (2001), p. 481.

and Japan and showed around 400 works and documents produced by forty-four European artists.[15] These efforts were previously indicated in Yamanaka Chirū's 'Internationalisation of Surrealist Thought', published in October 1936 in a special edition entitled *Surrealist Exchange* (*L'Échange Surréaliste*).[16] In this article, Yamanaka asks:

> How is Surrealism, with its thinking located within the dialectic between agreeing the outer and inner worlds, and with a continuous methodology that has discovered a way for striking a balance between the oppositions of reality and individuality of human existence, and which refuses to believe in barriers standing in between oppositions such as wakefulness and sleep, reality and dream, objectivity and subjectivity, consciousness and unconsciousness, now to consider the boundaries dividing nationalities and their languages?[17]

Offering a 'post script' to what was primarily a collection of translations of Surrealist texts published in French, he located the international character of Surrealism in relation to Breton's words from 'Surrealist Situation of the Object', a lecture given in Prague in 1934, quoting Comte De Lautréamont in the call that 'poetry must be created by everyone'.[18] Breton added to that call a logical conclusion that 'poetry must be understood by everyone' and Yamanaka was thus advocating a more open view of cultural differences, as most importantly imposed by the language barrier.[19] He went on to report how international Surrealist achievements included exhibitions in Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Copenhagen, Prague, Stockholm, Barcelona, Zurich, London and New York and gave a detailed account of different Surrealist groups in France, Czechoslovakia and England, undoubtedly aiming to give credence to

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[15] Yamanaka explained details of the exhibition in a later recollection (1971) saying how it was him who initially proposed the exhibition to Éluard and how Takiguchi and the *Mizue* helped with the project later on, as per: Ibid.
[16] Yamanaka Chirū ([1936] 2001). Shuruearisumu shisō no kokusaika: kōki ni kaete [Internationalisation of Surrealist Thought: Postscript]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 15: Shūrurearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 265-276.
[17] Ibid, p. 265. I am grateful to Miwako Bitmead for suggesting corrections in translation of this paragraph.
[18] Ibid, pp. 266-267. For the original quote see: Breton, André ([1935] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 262.
[19] Breton, André ([1935] 1974), p. 262.

similar activities in Japan.[20] If we recall that the same period would have been marked by a strong international focus of the French group, Surrealist activities in Japan undoubtedly started to take a more focused and recognisable shape during the first part of the 1930s and their resonance was felt back in France. In 1935, Takiguchi contributed to the *Cahiers d'art*, writing on the Surrealist situation in Japan whereas Okamoto exhibited *The Painful Arm* (*Le bras douloureux*, 1935) at the *International Exhibition of Surrealism* (*Exposition internationale du surréalisme*) at the Paris Galerie des Beaux-Arts in 1938.[21] Reaffirmation of the position that Japan held in the international framework of Surrealism could also be understood as a necessary counter-argument to the criticisms targeted against it, as in Kanbara Tai's 'The Fall of Surrealism'.

An informal exhibition catalogue was published ahead of the event, on May 20, as a special volume of the magazine *Mizue*, co-organiser of the show, under the title *Collection of Foreign Surrealist Works: Surrealist Album*.[22] Co-edited by Takiguchi and Yamanaka, it contained reproductions of 125 works exhibited, an introductory text, biographical details of all artists, an overview of Surrealism's developments from 1924 onwards, bibliographical details of related literature published in French from 1930 to date and an index.[23] The introductory text acknowledged how Surrealism had outgrown the borders of Paris and France to become a significant point of reference for artists around the world, especially after the *International Surrealist Exhibition* held in London in 1936.[24] The cover page, a decalcomania produced by Takiguchi, was featured in the issue 10 of the *Minotaure* in 1937 as a part of an illustrated feature 'Surrealism Around the World' (*Le surréalisme autour du monde*), affirming the intention of the organisers to establish a stronger

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[20] Yamanaka Chirū ([1936] 2001), pp. 268-275.
[21] For more details of these events see: Aspley, Keith (2010). *Historical Dictionary of Surrealism*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, p. 263. See also: Durozoi, Gérard ([1997] 2009). *History of the Surrealist Movement*. Translated by Alison Anderson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press pp. 325-236.
[22] Wada Hirofumi (ed.) (2001), p. 482.
[23] Introductory note and translation of captions into Japanese were completed by Takiguchi whereas everything else was compiled by Yamanaka, as per: Ibid.
[24] *Kaigai chōgenjitsushugi sakuhinshū: Album Surréaliste* [Collection of Foreign Surrealist Works: Surrealist Album] (1937). *Mizue*, Special Edition, No. 388, p. 1.

position for the movement in Japan within its international framework.[25] In an article about the exhibition published for the *Mizue* in August 1937, Yamanaka explained how as an event of international exchange the exhibition included a number of English Surrealists, but unfortunately no representatives from America.[26] According to this article, the idea of including Japanese artists in the exhibition was abandoned for the difficulty presented in the fact that although there were 'even more young artists with an interest in Surrealism in Japan than necessary' there was not a single, central group to facilitate the choice.[27] The article also made clear that the exhibition was seen by several thousands of visitors in each city that it toured (Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Nagoya), and that there were conferences organised at least in Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto to follow up the exhibition.

Yamanaka's comment concerning the number of Japanese artists in the country reaffirms a specific position occupied by Surrealism in Japan due to the absence of a single group. Although the exhibition had a decisive impact for affirming the prominence of Surrealism in the country, the movement was still attached to the term of 'avant-garde'. This is especially apparent in the June 1937 special volume of the *Atelier*, as it complemented the simultaneously-running exhibition with works produced by Japanese Surrealist artists, supplementing their exclusion from the show. Appearing at the same time, the volume attested to how Surrealism as a word was safely applied to an international context, whereas its reterritorialisation into the practice of Japanese artists would require deployment of the word 'avant-garde'. If we also recall that by 1937 Japan would intensify its military campaigning in the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it becomes clear how Japanese artists could not safely use the word in public. Yamanaka's comment with regard to the language barrier made in 'Internationalisation of Surrealist Thought' thus appears ironically well timed. In other words, under the political pressure in the later part of the decade, the leap that the

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[25] Le surréalisme autour du monde (1937). *Minotaure***,** No. 10, Vol. 3, unpaginated.
[26] Yamanka Chirū ([1937] 1999). Kaigai chōgenjitsushugi sakuhinten hōkokushō [Report about the Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūruearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 404-405.
[27] Ibid, p. 405.

Japanese audiences and artists would be required to make in approaching Surrealism was not that it was arriving in translation, as stressed by Kanbara at the turn of the decade, but 'between the lines' of the material available in Japanese language.

As the *Atelier* volume also included a number of photographic works, a direct reference to Surrealism it was aspiring to can be finally seen as informing titles of the amateur photo clubs emerging after the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*. They included Avant-Garde Photography Association (*Zen'ei Shashin Kyōkai*, Tokyo, 1937), Avant-Garde Image Group (*Avangarudo Zōei Shūdan*, Osaka, 1937) and Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde (*Nagoya Foto Avangarudo*, Nagoya, 1939). The use of the word 'avant-garde' both in its Japanese translation and as a loanword makes clear how the surge of Surrealist photography was embedded within a problematic context of the artistic avant-garde. After the word was first introduced in relation to Surrealist painting at the turn of the decade, it gained a wider recognition with the 1932 *Exhibition of New Art in Paris and Tokyo*. As the decade progressed, it came to signify both Surrealist and abstract painting, whereas after the 1937 *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* it mostly became synonymous with Surrealism, both of which are attested to in the special volume of the *Atelier* in June 1937.[28] The choice of titles for 'avant-garde' photo clubs after the 1937 exhibition can be therefore understood as directly implying an intention of Surrealist activity, establishing not only a relation to the exhibition of foreign works but to the concurrent issue of the *Atelier* that would also include Japanese artists and photographers.

Head-on collision between Surrealism and photography

The establishment of amateur photo clubs with an explicit interest in Surrealism after the 1937 exhibition provided a platform for advancing a discourse focusing specifically on the relationship between Surrealism and

[28] Namigata Tsuyoshi (2005), pp. 55-59.

photography in Japanese language. Among the most prominent three clubs in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, the critical voices of Takiguchi, Hanawa Gingo and Sakata Minoru can be singled out as the key points of reference in this discussion. Published in articles across specialist photography periodicals, these texts constitute a distinct discourse on the historiography, interpretation and practice of Surrealist photography in Japan of the time. As the critical engagement would signal articulation of an already existing practice, its diversity would resist a single discursive framework, due to differences existing between not only various photo clubs but also their varied members. As close readings of the main texts and photographs in this and the following three chapters will show, continuing differences among photographers in Tokyo and the Kansai region reveal the 'photo avant-garde' as a failed attempt at artificially creating a publically acceptable façade for versatile and prolific forms of artistic production resulting from the relationship between Surrealism and photography.

One of the most prominent texts directly addressing the relationship and appearing after the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* was Takiguchi's 'Photography and Surrealism' published in the February 1938 edition of the *Foto Taimusu*.[29] Takiguchi claimed in the article how Surrealist photography 'pulls out the beauty hidden in deep folds of the everyday and brings before the eyes snap shots of phenomena flying through the unconscious'.[30] He placed the definition in contrast to its understanding as a distortion of reality, situating the problem in terms of what he considered to be a general misconception of photography as a reliable document.[31] To Takiguchi, 'surreality' was equally contained within an amateur snap shot, a news image or a scientific photograph.[32] The genealogy of Surrealist photography was traced back in the article to Eugène Atget and established as playing a significant role in Breton's novels *Nadja* and *Mad Love* as well as in Surrealist

[29] Takiguchi Shūzō (1938). Shashin to chōgenjitsushugi [Photography and Surrealism]. *Foto Taimsu*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 50-55.
[30] Ibid, p. 50.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

publications such as the *Minotaure*.[33] Man Ray, Brassaï, Dora Maar and Bellmer were singled out as photographers working in the closest relation to Surrealism, with recognition of the difficulty in identifying Surrealist photographers because 'a formal borderline for Surrealist photography does not exist'.[34] Collaboration between Man Ray and Éluard on the album *Easy* (*Facile*, 1935) and similar collaborations between Surrealist photographers and poets was highly regarded, as for Takiguchi the relationship between photography and poetry deserved a special attention.[35]

Takiguchi's interest in Surrealist photography affirmed in the article would be reasserted in his continuous presence within photographic criticism in the following two years.[36] As a founding member of the Tokyo club, he would continue to engage with the relationship between Surrealism and photography, mostly in the same magazine. The interest should be understood against his privileged position as a recognised Surrealist poet, translator of the most prominent of Breton's texts in the previous years and one of the chief organisers of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*. That such a figure of authority should be included in the establishment of an amateur photo club needs to be considered as a strong statement in favour of importance of these outlets, as they would operate as sites of collaborative research between artists of varied backgrounds. Such grouping was a common feature in Japan of the time and had a legacy in terms of avant-garde practice ever since the Futurist Art Association (*Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai*) was founded in 1920. Apart from research and exchange, it was also aimed at acquiring exhibition opportunities outside of strictly regulated preferences of the institutionalised art world that did not favour vanguard activities. 'Exhibition collectivism' that characterised avant-garde art in Japan can thus be regarded

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[33] Ibid, p. 52.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, pp. 52-53. For how Takiguchi considered Surrealist photography as 'photo-poetry' (referred to in Japanese as *shashin-shi* and in a loanword as *fotopoeji*) see: Ibid, p. 51.
[36] For how Takiguchi's interest in photography developed at an early age of twelve after the death of his father see: Hamada Mayumi (2010). Senzen no Abe Yoshifumi no katsudō: Takiguchi Shūzō to no kankei wo chūshin ni [Abe Yoshifumi's Prewar Activities: Focus on the Relationship with Takiguchi Shūzō]. *Niigata Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan Kenkyū Kiyō* [Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art Research Bulletin], No 9, p. 12.

as complemented by 'collaborative collectivism' of the separate local clubs to which the artists would have belonged.[37]

However, although 'Surrealism and Photography' provided an important overview of Surrealist photography and urged for a development of a similar practice in Japan, Takiguchi's art historical approach did not bring forth any relevant examples already existing in Japan at the time but remained rooted in the movement's activities in France. The type of writing resonated strongly in another article published in a special issue of the magazine *Kagaku Pen* (*Science Pen*) dedicated to Surrealism in June 1938. The article was similarly entitled 'Photography and Surrealism' and was written by Tanaka Masao, a photographic critic and another member of the Tokyo club.[38] This time it was published together with other essays focusing on Surrealism and its relation to psychoanalysis, automatism and fashion, in a monthly interface of activities of the Science Pen Club (*Kagaku Pen Kurabu*), which was primarily interested in investigating contemporary culture via natural sciences.[39] Providing no illustrations and drawing heavily on Takiguchi's writing, the article can be seen as a form of producing a coherent critical argument surrounding historiography, implications and meanings of the relationship between Surrealism and photography within the members of the same amateur club.[40] The main feature of the critical approach to Surrealist photography in Tokyo thus becomes Takiguchi's insistence on a straight shot as the most adequate means of its practice, a view he has been developing with regard to Atget's

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[37] For the development of 'collaborative collectivism' in Japanese postwar art see: Tomii, Reiko (2007). After the 'Descent to Everyday': Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964-1973. In: Stimson, Blake and Sholette, Gregory (eds.), *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, p. 69.

[38] Tanaka Masao ([1938] 2001). Shashin to shuruearisumu [Photography and Surrealism]. In: Wada Hirofumi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūruearisumu 15: Shūruearisumu kihon shiryō shūsei* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 15: Surrealism, Collection of Fundamental Documents]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 298-300.

[39] For details about the magazine and description of the seven pieces on Surrealism included in the issue see: Ibid, pp. 480-481.

[40] The article reaffirmed a strong presence of Surrealism in Man Ray's work, its connection to modernist photographic techniques such as photomontage and solarisation and quoted Takiguchi's article to continue the praise for the album *Easy* (1935), as per: Tanaka Masao ([1938] 2001), pp. 298-300.

work since 1934.[41] The same opinion was reaffirmed in another text published in the May 1938 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, titled 'Interchange Between Painting and Photography'.[42] There, Takiguchi claimed how documentary character and objectivity of photography were superior models of pursuing Surrealist dialectic to 'modelling photography after surrealist painting'.[43] By such a claim, Takiguchi was making an attempt to re-establish photography as independent from painting, regardless of the fact that Surrealist artists in Japan would make an active use of both media developing them alongside each other and that such practice was embedded in the emergence of Surrealist photography in Japan.

However, although Takiguchi would be considered as a decisive critical voice behind the Tokyo club, publishing critical opinions on the relationship between Surrealism and photography would also be a practice of the other members of the same club such as Imai Shigeru and Abe Yoshifumi, established painters who experimented with photography. Illustrated with their own photographs, these articles would deliver their own views of Surrealism and its relation to photography. For instance, in the October 1938 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* Imai identified how the task of Surrealist photography was to 'discover by the means of the camera the strange beauty of the universe suppressed by consciousness, aiming for a harmony of conscious and unconscious activities, the settlement of the two into a single entity'.[44] Imai accompanied the text with a number of his own images, all of which are photo-collages and applied the technique to construct strange juxtapositions celebrated by Lautréamont, whom he quotes in the text.[45] The 'harmony of conscious and unconscious thinking' is thus not achieved in a straight shot but in a distinct application of

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[41] Takeba, Joe (2003). The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.), *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, Note 10, p. 150. For the original text, published in the January 1934 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, see: Takiguchi Shūzō ([1934] 1991-1998). Ejeinu Atoje [Eugène Atget]. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Senzen senchū hen I: 1926-1936* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Prewar and War Period 1, 1926-1936]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 347-350.
[42] Takiguchi Shūzō (1938). Shashin to kaiga no kōryū [Interchange Between Photography and Painting]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 30-37.
[43] I rely on a translation of this phrase, as per: Takeba, Joe (2003), p. 150.
[44] Imai Shigeru (1938). Shuruearizumu foto ni tai suru oboegaki [Surrealist Photography Memorandum]. *Foto Taimsu*, Vol. 15, No. 10, p. 51.
[45] Ibid, p. 52.

photo-collage. Similarly to Takiguchi's understanding of beauty to be 'hiding in the deep folds of the everyday', Imai suggests the beauty to be 'suppressed by consciousness' and sees in the camera apparatus the ability to visualise it. Although the two agree in the fact that beauty lies 'out of sight', the main approach Imai applies in the task of bringing it to vision is not a straight photograph but a photo-collage. In the text, Imai did not disregard what he terms as a 'real photo' (*rearu foto*) for delivery of Surrealist content, insisting how Dalí's paranoiac critical method offers the means by which it can be used in Surrealism and describing examples of Dali's and Man Ray's works as case studies.[46] To him, all technological methods offered by photography: 'real photo', photomontage, photogram and photo-objects aimed at this same goal.[47]

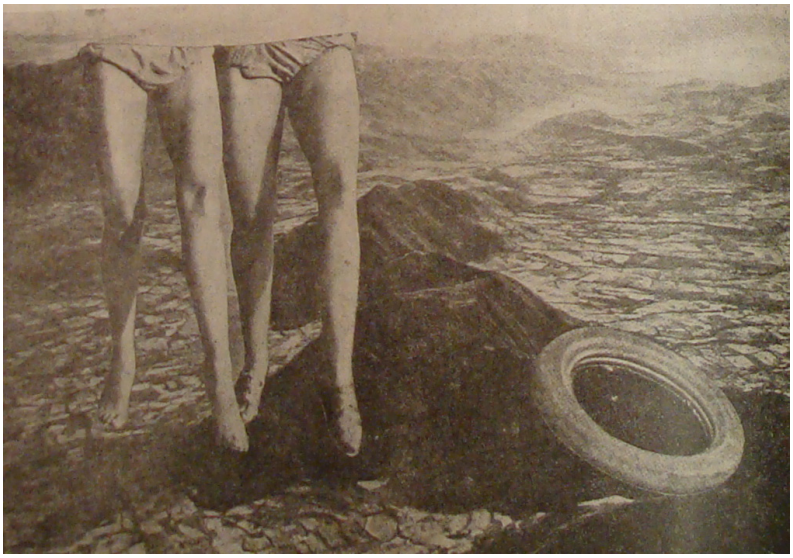

Figure 2.3: Imai Shigeru, *In Flight*, 1936.

None of the images in the text is titled but they also include his best-known work *In Flight* (*A la volée*, 1936) (Figure 2.3). The image is showing an automobile tyre on the seashore juxtaposed with two pairs of bare female legs, seen walking towards the viewer. It was first exhibited in 1936 at the second exhibition of the New Plasticity Art Association (*Shin Zōkei Bijutsu*

[46] Ibid, pp. 51-52. Unlike Takiguchi, Imai sees Man Ray's album *Photography is Not Art* (*La Photographie n'est pas l'art*, 1937) as a primary example of Surrealist photography and terms it 'anti-art photography' (*higeijutsu-teki shashin*), as per: Ibid, pp. 53-54.
[47] In the text these categories are discussed in separate sections following each other, with 'object photo' termed in Japanese as *obuje foto*, as per: Ibid, p. 54.

Kyōkai), founded in 1934 as the first collective that pursued Surrealist art and whose members included both Takiguchi and Yamanaka.[48] Further to this exhibition, the image was included in the *International Exhibition of Surrealism*, together with another three Japanese artists: Shimozato Yoshio, Suzuki Ayako and Ōtsuka Kōji.[49] Imai's image is included in the accompanying publication of the exhibition, titled *Short Dictionary of Surrealism* (*Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme*, 1938), alongside prominent Surrealists from France and elsewhere. The publication also accredits both Takiguchi and Yamanaka, the former as a 'Surrealist poet and writer' and the latter as a 'Surrealist poet and writer; promoter of the movement in Japan'.[50] Primarily a painter, Imai is thus contradicting Takiguchi's dismissal of the relation between photography and painting and his claim of a straight shot as the best means for delivery of a Surrealist photograph from within the same club. Takiguchi's simultaneous involvement with Surrealist art groups to that of his position in the Avant-Garde Photography Association is significantly written out of his 'Surrealism and Photography'.

Following Takiguchi's article, further elaboration of the connection between Surrealism and photography was provided by Hanawa, in a feature entitled 'Development of Surrealism in the Photographic Image' also published in the *Foto Taimusu* in April 1938.[51] Hanawa established the genealogy of Surrealist photography in a wider context, connecting the development of Surrealism to Dada and providing a detailed account of Surrealist activities, including descriptions of exquisite corpse game, collage and frottage, the Surrealist object and Dali's paranoiac-critical method.[52] He situated monthly activities of his Osaka-based club (Avant-Garde Image Group) in a direct lineage to Surrealism's development in Japan after the 1937 exhibition, accrediting Takiguchi for its organisation.[53] The main techniques that Hanawa identified

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[48] Omuka Toshiharu (ed.) (2001), p. 382.
[49] Breton, André (et al.) (1938). *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Galerie Beaux-Arts, p. 37 and p. 66.
[50] Ibid, p. 27 and p. 30.
[51] Hanawa Gingo (1938). Shashinga ni okeru chōgenjitsushugi no hatten [Development of Surrealism in the Photographic Image]. *Foto Taimsu*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 30-35.
[52] Ibid, pp. 30-32.
[53] Ibid, p. 32.

as able to capture automatism and the 'world of dreams' in photography were solarisation and collage.[54] However, he stressed strange juxtapositions as explorations of chance effects to be the main characteristic of Surrealist photography and included his own photographs as an illustration.[55]

Figure 2.4: Hanawa Gingo, *Untitled*, 1938.

An untitled image accredited simply as the ninth figure in the text shows a female hand protruding from a waste bin (Figure 2.4). Hanawa explained that the motif was adopted from Tanahashi Shisui, another member of the same club, and that it was based on the 'charming strangeness of a beautiful female hand that was thrown away in a rubbish bin in a corner of a dirty factory'.[56] Although the photograph implies Takiguchi's view of Surrealist photography as bringing forth the 'beauty hidden in deep folds of the everyday', the Surrealist technique Hanawa quotes as achieving the tension in the image is displacement (*dépaysement*), a quintessential Surrealist strategy of deliberate dislocation of objects from their referential context applied in order to bring forward their Surrealist qualities.[57] Such contextualisation of the image resonates strongly with Breton's formulation of the strategy of displacement.

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[54] Ibid, pp. 33-34.
[55] Ibid, p. 34.
[56] Ibid. I am grateful to Miwako Bitmead for pointing out the phrase 'charming strangeness'.
[57] *Dépaysement* is referred to in a loanword as *depeizuman*, and in Japanese translation as *tenchihō* (transposition), as per: Ibid. For a definition of displacement in Surrealism see: Warehime, Marja (1996). *Brassaï: Images of Culture and the Surrealist Observer*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, p. 41.

In a collection of critical texts *Break of Day* (*Point du jour*, 1934), he stated that 'complete disorientation from everything' is one of the main characteristics of 'surreality'.[58] The example with which he illustrated the strategy is that of a statue being no less interesting when found in a ditch than when seen in a square, explaining how 'it goes without saying that you can disorient a hand by isolating it from its arm, that this hand takes more value as a hand'.[59] Hanawa thus evokes this explanation in his photograph and explores the motif of 'a hand isolated from its arm' in the untitled image numbered as figure nine, in order to visualise the strategy. However, he underlined how the effect of defamiliarisation was achieved in the illustrations accompanying the text by a deliberate construction of the scene.[60] Rather than looking for surreality in the existing everyday scenery, Hanawa constructed a setting for the camera.

For Hanawa, as for Takiguchi, 'surreality' exists in reality, in front of the camera. Unlike in painting, where an image is ostensibly constructed, photography has the means of exposing representation more directly, by the fact that a camera always bears witness to the real. In other words, displacement is facilitated and effectively made possible by the means of photography. Thus, the relationship between Surrealism and photography involves a paradox, which he explains:

> Surrealism and photography. This looks as if they are concepts inviting a head-on collision. However, Surrealism invites precisely this type of contradicting conflict.[61]

Namely, he understands photography to enable exactly the contradiction Surrealism is exploring in its search to discover 'the more real than real world

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[58] Breton, André ([1929] 1999). *Break of Day*. Translated by Mark Polizzotti and Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 48.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Established with regard to another image in the text titled *Factory Gentlemen*, as per: Hanawa Gingo (1938), p. 33.
[61] Ibid, pp. 30-35. I am thankful to Miwako Bitmead for suggesting the correction of the phrase 'this looks as if they are concepts'.

behind the real' and is also evocative of Lautréamont.[62] However, it is primarily a constructed, directed photograph that achieves this goal.

Avant-Garde Image Group, an amateur photography club established in Osaka in 1937, consisted of twenty members previously included in the Naniwa Photography Club and the Tampei Photography Club, the most prominent outlets for practising photography in the city, in an immediate response to the 1937 exhibition. Although a prominent practitioner himself, Hanawa took up the role of promoting and criticising the club's activities, also including such members as Hirai Terushichi.[63] Unlike Takiguchi, he recognised the popularity of Surrealism in Japan at the time, making a note in his article that even photographers can often encounter Surrealist images and texts in specialist magazines.[64] His writing also included examples of other Japanese artists working in the domain of Surrealist photography, such as Ei-Kyū and Tarui Yoshio. His position was equally established in relation to Surrealist literature: he noted how Julien Levy's *Surrealism* (1936) is among his reference books, and recommended Japanese readers to consult the special issue of the magazine *Mizue* published in the previous year, for viewing the works shown in the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*, and the special issue of the magazine *Atelier* from June 1937, as a good source of Surrealist art criticism.[65] He also expressed his strong bewilderment at the fact that there was no deeper interest in Surrealist photography in Tokyo, and that the practice was condemned as 'evil' in the capital.[66] Hanawa thus demonstrates a deep understanding and knowledge of Surrealism and its relation to photography and situates his work in a direct connection to it. His practice to accompany his writing with images produced by himself and other Japanese artists as well as in reference to the writings by Japanese photographers and critics was extensive. The number of articles he produced with regard to the relationship between Surrealism and photography in Japan in the period between 1936 and 1938 attests to a more liberal atmosphere

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[62] Levy, Julien ([1936] 1968). *Surrealism*. New York: Arno/Worldwide, p. 3.
[63] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990), pp. 190-191.
[64] Hanawa Gingo (1938), p. 32.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

surrounding the activities of his club.[67] Furthermore, he theorises the relation in specific terms originating in Surrealism, extending the application of displacement within photography and formulating another prominent strand of its achievement, that of a staged image.

Takiguchi and Hanawa, together with other members of their clubs, were not the only critical voices publishing criticism on the relationship between Surrealism and photography. Simultaneously, a different approach to the relationship was developing in Nagoya, where the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde was founded in 1939. Establishment of the club resulted from Surrealist activities evolving around Yamanaka and a Surrealist painter Shimozato Yoshio. Together with the two figures, the club was formed by photographers Sakata Minoru, Tajima Tsugio and Yamamoto Kansuke from a photographic section entitled Nagoya Photo Group (*Nagoya Foto Guruppe*), first established in 1934 and later integrated in a larger group of Surrealists gathered in the Nagoya Avant-Garde Club (*Nagoya Abangarudo Kurabu*) in 1937. As the most established member of the club, Yamanaka published a number of articles on the subject of photography for the *Shashin Saron* (*Photography Salon*) and the *Foto Taimusu*. They offer a significant insight into his interest in photography theory, undoubtedly developed concurrently with the establishment of the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde.[68] His involvement with such an outlet would reaffirm the significance of amateur photo clubs for the advancement of Surrealist practice. Regardless of his significant intervention in the domain of Surrealist photography, Yamanaka's main focus remained on Surrealist poetry. Also, although Shimozato, primarily a painter, already started developing an interest in photography, he will not theorise its relationship to Surrealism prior to 1938. Therefore, Sakata would assume the role of providing the club's critical voice in terms of the relationship between Surrealism and photography, expanding it to a specific view of abstraction and thus even further diversifying the discursive field.

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[67] Some of these articles are discussed in the following Chapter 3.
[68] As per: Notes to Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.) (1999), p. 467. These articles will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Sakata's 'Photo Abstraction and Photo Surrealism', published in the *Shashin Geppō* (*Photography Monthly*) in four parts from December 1937 to March 1938 preceded Takiguchi's writing in the *Foto Taimusu*.[69] In the first part of the article, dated September 1937, he situated Surrealism in a wider European avant-garde context, in relation to other art movements such as Cubism, Futurism and Dada and quoted Breton as its founder.[70] He also situated Surrealism in relation to an interpretation offered by Yamanaka that 'surreal is a word that is used as an adjective to indicate a complete change in the internal reality laying behind the external, not as a separate condition transcending reality but a single form of reality'.[71] Definitions he offered of 'photo abstraction' and 'photo surrealism' kept them integrated within the 'avant-garde' as interconnected but different. The first was seen as related to the New Objectivity and exemplified by László Moholy-Nagy's work, with Nakayama and Koishi as representatives in Japan.[72] 'Photo surrealism' was understood as allowing a contact with fantastical expression resembling primitivism and was exemplified in the practices of Man Ray, Maar, Bellmer as well as Japanese artists Ei-Kyū and Tarui.[73] The task of an 'avant-garde' artist was seen as aiming to 'expand the territory' (*ryōiki wo kakujū*) of the 'first' commonly perceived reality to the 'second' and the 'third' contained within it: internal reality, Freudian imagination (*furoidizumu no sōzō*) and the world of dreams.[74] Sakata illustrated the largest part of his argument with his own photographs, alongside reproductions of works by Maar, Bellmer, Oscar Dominguez, Breton and Miró.

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[69] Sakata Minoru ([1938 (I-III)] 2001). Foto abustrakushon to foto shururearizumu [Photo Abstraction and Photo Surrealism]. In: Takeba, Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 112-136. See also: Sakata Minoru (1938 (IV)). Foto abustrakushon to foto shururearizumu [Photo Abstraction and Photo Surrealism]. *Shashin Geppō*, March Edition, pp. 45-51.

[70] Including a definition of Surrealism as 'psychic automatism in its pure state', as per: Sakata Minoru ([1938 (I-III)] 2001), p. 115.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Nakayama's photograms and Koishi's *Early Summer Nerves* are specifically referred to in this context, as per: Ibid, p. 116.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Sakata identifies the problem with this task in the fact that there was no education enabling it. The 'avant-garde' artist was thus forced to 'follow a rope grounded in the first reality into the unknown', as per: Ibid, p. 117.

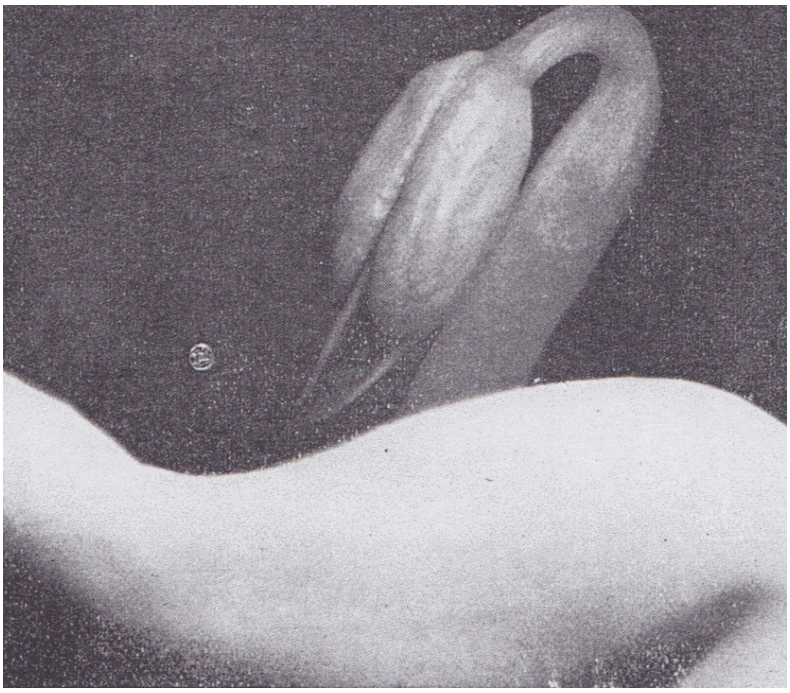

Figure 2.5: Sakata Minoru, *Energetic Body Curve*, 1937.

An image included in the first part of the text and titled *Energetic Body Curve* (*Enerugisshu na kyokusentai*) shows a nude female body against a sprout and a button (Figure 2.5). In the accompanying explanation Sakata said how the image shows a 'fortuitous encounter between a button and a sprout on a hill of a body'.[75] Therefore, he also refers to Lautréamont's well-known definition to produce a strange juxtaposition in the image and, similarly to Imai, also applies photo-collage to achieve the effect. In the article, he also insisted how photography was not any different to other media in its 'avant-garde' claim and a straight shot, photogram, photomontage or any manipulated image were rendered as equal to him in this respect, again as in Imai's case.[76]

Sakata's work based on his previous involvement with the Naniwa Photography Club during the time he spent living in Osaka. Reference to Nakayama and Koishi acknowledges this relationship in his article and the term 'photo abstraction' is thus situated in relation to Surrealist photography as emerging from within 'new' photography. After moving to Nagoya in 1934

[75] Ibid, p. 119.
[76] Ibid, p. 118.

Sakata had opened a photo equipment shop that would serve as a meeting point between himself, Yamanaka and Shimozato, and his articulation of photography as an art practice, similarly to Imai's, should be understood as developing from his association with the two Surrealists.[77] This instalment of the article can thus be read as a development of Sakata's practice after moving to Nagoya and becoming exposed to their work. However, the entire piece also demonstrates the ambition of Sakata's own project, with its length, overabundance of images and the amount of technical terms used to describe them as its chief characteristics.[78] Lacking Takiguchi's art historical eloquence and aiming to develop a sustained argument not from a theoretical but a practitioner's point of view Sakata would complicate his writing significantly in the final two parts of the article and fail to offer a coherent argument behind his idea of 'photo abstraction'.[79]

After consolidation of the occupation of Manchuria and establishment of an occupied state of Manchukuo in 1932, the culture in Japan went through a period of renaissance, although the political *status quo* induced its progressive depoliticisation and commercialisation. Implications of the situation for Surrealist practice were contradictory. Regardless of the fact that the 1932 and 1937 exhibitions attested to a greater international exchange resulting in unprecedented Surrealist production in the visual arts, such artworks were not allowed any critical reference that would assign them their true Surrealist meaning. This generated a practice in which their technical and iconographical properties were foregrounded but also imposed a withdrawal from the public among a large number of artists.[80] The situation is clearly reflected in critical writing on the relationship between Surrealism and photography. In Takiguchi's case, although active in writing Surrealist poetry,

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[77] Sakata Minoru (1988). *Zōkei shashin 1934-1941: Sakata Minoru sakuhinshū* [*Structure in Photography: Minoru Sakata's Anthology*]. Nagoya: Arumu, p. 164.
[78] These characteristics will distinguish much of Sakata's writing throughout the decade. Apart from eight photographs in the second part, another five of his images accompany the text in the following instalments, together with reproductions of works by Man Ray, Hannah Höch, Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Katō Hiroshi and Hattori Yoshifumi.
[79] Sakata's and Yamanaka's collaborative project delivered in the second instalment of the article is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
[80] Clark, John (1993). Surrealism in Japan. In: National Gallery of Australia (ed.), *Surrealism: Revolution by Night* (Exh. Cat.). Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, p. 210.

he avoids making any direct links to practices in Japan and remains on the level of an art historical approach to the material produced by the French group. Hanawa recognises that such an approach would have been a predominant attitude towards Surrealism in Tokyo and differentiates the Kansai region as more open to experimentation. However, although he situates the activities of his club in a clear Surrealist context, he does not comment on any social or political implications that they may have. Finally, Sakata's alignment of 'photo-surrealism' with 'photo-abstraction' reflects on the situation occurring within the avant-garde painting of the time, in which Surrealist and abstract tendencies in the country were often tacitly affiliated and exhibited together to give wider credibility to their activities.[81] Such a variety of voices theorising the relationship between Surrealism and photography around Japan can be seen as a similar form of national dispersion of Surrealist activities as taking place in Belgium, where a number of unorthodox 'Surrealisms' were also flourishing in absence of a single group.[82] This situation might signal that different projects and consequently different views of Surrealism were shaping around different photo clubs. Therefore, exploring diverse variations and tensions between 'Surrealisms' in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya separately would possibly offer a better understanding of their individual positioning and specific contexts. Whereas the following chapters will pay closer attention to the separate activities of different clubs, they should be viewed as a topology of a single, minor history of Surrealist photography in the decade. Under such a condition, they form an interconnected cartographic image also including such individual artists who did not belong to photography clubs, such as Ei-Kyū.[83]

An attempt at mobilising disparate practices formulating in 'avant-garde' photo clubs as parts of a single discussion was made in the Avant-Garde

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[81] Ibid, p. 207.
[82] For in-depth analysis of Surrealism in Belgium in this context see: Paenhuysen, An (2005). Surrealism in the Provinces. Flemish and Walloon Identity in the Interwar Period. *Image and Narrative*, Vol. 13 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/surrealism/paenhuysen.htm [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[83] At least in this chapter, this possibility could be pursued in a repeated reference to Lautréamont's phrase, discussed in Introduction.

Photography Symposium (*Zen'ei shashin zadankai*) organised by the *Foto Taimusu* with the help of Takiguchi and Koishi in June 1938. The very term 'avant-garde', a conjuncture for a variety of practices developing simultaneously in Tokyo and the Kansai region, was the main subject of the meeting, with participants of the symposium including representatives of the largest photo clubs in the country. [84] Takiguchi, Nagata Isshū, Imai, Hanawa, Tarui, Abe, Koishi and Sakata took part in the meeting, together with a number of poets and painters, such as Fukuzawa and Murano Shirō as well as the editor of the *Foto Taimusu* Tamura Sakae. A nuanced meaning of the term 'avant-garde' was stressed in the introductory notes, as Takiguchi asserted how the main goal of the gathering was set to formulate it against the political implications that it used to have in its earlier use.[85] Fukuzawa further stressed how the term also implied a set of problems inherited in photography from its use in painting, whereas the issues regarding the relation with Surrealism and abstraction needed to be considered as of key importance.[86] Thereof, 'the problem of Surrealism' made up a significant part of the discussion with Takiguchi, Hanawa and Sakata offering their independent views, in accordance with previously published articles.[87]

The symposium was by no means unbiased. Takiguchi and the Tokyo club hosted the event together with the Oriental, publisher of the *Foto Taimusu*, while photographers from the Kansai region were invited by Koishi following their annual exhibition in 1938. Since Tamura took over the role of a chief editor of the *Foto Taimusu* from Kimura Sen'ichi in 1933, the monthly

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[84] For a description of this meeting as the first and the last opportunity of a sustained exchange among 'various proponents of Surrealism in Tokyo and Kansai', see: Takeba, Joe (2003), p. 150.
[85] Zen'ei shashin zadankai [Avant-Garde Photography Symposium] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 9, p. 8.
[86] Ibid, pp. 8-9.
[87] Takiguchi reconfirmed his view that 'surreality' is contained within reality and urged Surrealist photographers to use a 'straight' shot alongside more elaborate techniques such as rayography and solarisation. Hanawa agreed that there is a special potential in the specific properties of the photographic apparatus that facilitates underlining of Surrealist content, and gave an example of a recent production of Surrealist landscapes by various members of the Tampei Photo Club. Sakata Minoru brought forward the role of the viewer in understanding 'avant-garde' content and assigned a significant role to any attempt to make the material more accessible and understandable to the general public. He also made a point of his previous argument that interlinked Surrealist and abstract tendencies under the joint term of 'avant-garde', as per: Ibid. pp. 15-17.

periodical supported radical approaches to photography, becoming a 'bastion' for progressive image production and writing in the aftermath of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* through to the last issue of the magazine published in December 1940. However, the company Oriental was also a supporter of photojournalism and a commissioner of the chief commercial works in the country, working in close relationship with governmental bodies.[88] The event was thus framed as a learning session organised by Tokyo photographers to inform themselves of a more radical practice taking place in Osaka and Nagoya.[89] The reason for such an interest would be driven by radicalism of both those clubs achieved in the previous year and their advanced knowledge and practice of Surrealism is attested in Hanawa's and Sakata's previous articles. Although the meeting showed how different understandings of 'avant-garde' were developing in Tokyo and the Kansai region, it nevertheless made an attempt to affirm the difference and disagreement as positive features of the discussion. It identified both the difficulty of adequately defining the meaning of 'avant-garde' as a singular form of activity against the variety of practitioners and the inability of clearly surveying their own position in a specific historical time-space.[90] The meeting should also be understood within the political frame of the time, as the situation in 1938 would have already differed from the year before. Whereas organisation of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* was a result of the stable years between 1932 and 1937, the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese war in the same year imposed a different context on avant-garde activities, as the very word was considered to be synonymous with not only Surrealism but also Communism.

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[88] This subject is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

[89] Such intent would be further demonstrated by often use of the word 'research' to refer to the works of the gathered photographers, for example in Tamura's addressing of Hanawa, as per: Zen'ei shashin zadankai (1938), p. 14.

[90] This discussion mostly made the first part of the meeting. It was Tarui Yoshio who identified the historical specificity of avant-garde activity in comparison to subjectivism, as per: Ibid, pp. 9-10. As the problem of avant-garde necessarily led up to the issue of form and content, Imai claimed how it needed to be historically interpreted, as per: Ibid, p. 11. Thereon, Takiguchi made clear that it was exactly a disagreement that opened up the possibility for avant-garde to formulate new understanding of practice, as per: Ibid, p. 13.

The meeting thus attested to how the context of 'photo avant-garde', although equally short-lived and insufficiently effective in containing Surrealist photography as that of 'new' photography, would allow crystallisation of the practice as a focused and deliberate production, visualising and theorising the key Surrealist concepts. 'Photo avant-garde' enabled publication of significant material that dealt with the relationship between Surrealism and photography. However, if it is viewed against a wider context of avant-garde art, Surrealism and Japanese photography, it remains in a position that can be considered as suspended between 'what is not longer' and 'what is not yet'. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben uses such an illustration to affirm Kafka's ability to articulate his own historical situation, regardless of his marginalised position.[91] The same position of liminality and suspension of 'photo avant-garde' as that of Kafka's is evident in the closing section of the first part of Sakata's 'Photo Abstraction and Photo Surrealism', in which he insisted how art photography was facing a problem of existing on the margins of the 'photography world' (*shashin kai*), a phrase widely used to indicate a network of photographic clubs, magazines and exhibitions.[92] To him, the problem can result in that it either becomes a complacent amusement or adjusts to society.[93] As much as the practice retained its distance from the society, he wrote, it still continued to occupy commercial spaces, including those offered by the newspapers and magazines.[94] His summary of the situation reads:

> Regardless whether it is photo-abstraction or photo-surrealism, the situation in which the 'photography world' is still in its infancy, in which there is a small number of actual practitioners and little group activity, it is forced to wait for an adequate moment for its realisation, but it is possible that before such a day arrives it would have committed suicide, similarly to Dada.[95]

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[91] Agamben, Giorgio ([1994] 1999). *The Man Without Content*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, p. 69.
[92] Sakata Minoru ([1938 (I-III)] 2001), p. 119.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Sakata underlines the exhibitions of the Naniwa Photo Club and Ashiya Salon as recent outlets of art photography in this context, whereas commercial spaces also included department store leaflets and show windows, as per: Ibid, p. 120.
[95] Ibid.

Within such a description of the situation, he defined his personal position as that of a 'stray sheep' (*mayoeru hitsuji*), incapable of initiating a change and thus awaiting for development of the situation from the sidelines.[96] For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, it is precisely the position on the margins of literary society that enabled Kafka to understand the importance of grasping one's own historical condition, as stressed by Agamben. The liminal position of a minor literature releases its potential to resolve a historical condition in which it is entrapped by transcendence of subjective positions. In this regard, they read the goal of a solitary researcher in Kafka's story 'Investigations of a Dog' (1922) to be aimed at forming an assemblage of collective enunciations, a relation to similarly marginalised individuals, 'even if this collectivity is no longer or not yet given'.[97] Such an illustration becomes of relevance for the practice of Surrealist photography in Japan as it reaffirms the potential of its minor historical status as always in the processes of shifting and bending, interested mainly in introducing glitches and distortions in any 'major' discourse, regardless of whether it is formulated within 'new' or 'avant-garde' photography. The historical position of Surrealist photography during the decade will maintain such a marginalised position with regard to all predominant practices of photography. Although it would become more visible within a discourse developing around the relationship between Surrealism and photography in the aftermath of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*, 'strangers' from the first part of the decade such as Ei- Kyū, or 'stray sheeps' formulating their practice on the margins of a marginalised practice, such as Sakata, should be seen as interconnected figures in its minor history, specifically due to their isolation. Following Deleuze and Guattari, they would assume agency in relation to each other, as part of a single minor construction. Such a dispersed network, or an assemblage of heterogeneous individuals, is becoming more visible within a discussion forming among varied practitioners within the so-called 'photo avant-garde' but cannot be contained within it.

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[96] Ibid, p. 121.
[97] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix ([1975] 1986). *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 18.

Bewildering sensation

In 1938, the year in which Surrealist photography would thrive in Japan on an unprecedented scale, the country was deeply involved in military operations in the continent, and co-signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Nazi Germany and Italy in 1936 and 1937.[98] The transition into wartime years did not bring an end to modern culture, but reflected on all segments of daily life. The very term 'everyday life' (*seikatsu*) was soon to be replaced with 'everyday life of the nation's people' in 1939 (*kokumin seikatsu*), assigning governmental control to every aspect of individual inhabitation, both the body and the space that it occupied.[99] Under the new policy, any transgression of a highly conservative model of life was bound to raise suspicion and result in public condemnation and persecution. Therefore, migration of purely Surrealist content into the framework of 'avant-garde' art becomes another layer in the process of its deterritorialisation from the means of practice in Europe and reterritorialisation into a time-space of 1930s Japan. However, an additional problem presenting itself in the attempt to contextualise production of such highly deterritorialised Surrealist photography in Japan is the means by which the texts and images framing the discussion around it would be distributed. Sakata points to the fact that Surrealist photography would be made visible through the illustrated press as a compromise enforced upon it by the cramped space it occupied as a marginalised practice. However, Kafka himself celebrated the space of magazines as invigorating minor literature. In his diary note 'The Literature of Small Peoples' (1911) he writes:

> What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes pace in the full light of day, what is there a passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death.[100]

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[98] Goto-Jones, Christopher (2009). *Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 81.
[99] Silverberg, Miriam (2006). *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 140.
[100] Kafka, Franz and Brod, Max (1976). *The Diaries, 1910-1923*. New York: Schocken Books, p. 149.

Depression of the late 1920s resulted in the fact that the consumption of images rather than objects became central to Japanese modern culture.[101] This was a characteristic of a society predominantly perceiving itself through the images mediated through film and mass media and in which commercialised culture was starting to be available to everyone.[102] Such culture, accompanied with the rise of mass communication, determined the very possibility of photographic magazines, most certainly operating within what Walter Benjamin defined as 'the adjustment of reality to masses and of the masses to reality' by the means of photographic reproduction.[103] As printed media, newspapers and magazines, preceded other forms of communication, or radio and television, they functioned as depositories of the everyday modern life.[104] Under such circumstances, photographic magazines such as the *Foto Taimusu*, *Kamera Āto*, *Kamera Kurabu* (*Camera Club*) and alike occupied a specific position serving primarily as a means of communication between different photographic clubs in the country, informing one another of their activities.[105] Many of the photographs produced at the time were mainly intended for print, and without the illustrated press and specialised magazines their existence would have been impossible.[106] Functioning as an 'alternative space' for viewing photography, especially at the time lacking any form of institutional collecting or exhibiting of the medium, the periodicals were operating from a marginalised position of specialised

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[101] Silverberg, Miriam (2006), p. 23.
[102] Ajioka, Chiaki (1998). The Lure of the City. In: Menzies, Jackie (ed.), *Modern Boy, Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese Art 1910-1935* (Exh. Cat.). Sydney, NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, p. 39. For a discussion on how the mass media, including popular and illustrated magazines, newspapers and tabloids, together with other forms of entertainment such as radio and cinema comprised a predominant discourse of daily life and prompted the idea of modern life as determined by a constant desire for commodities see: Harootunian, Harry D. (2000). *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice and the Question of Everyday Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 116.
[103] Benjamin, Walter ([1936] 2008). *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin, p. 10.
[104] For how the very term 'magazine' in English and French referred to a 'storehouse' prior to a 'printed periodical' see: Scholes, Robert and Wulfman, Clifford (2010). *Modernism in the Magazines: an Introduction*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 27.
[105] Ishii Ayako (et al.) (1999). *Nihon no shashinka 15: Koishi Kiyoshi to zen'ei shashin* [Complete Collection of Japanese Photographers 15: Koishi Kiyoshi and Avant-Garde Photography]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, p. 63.
[106] Gilbert, Jeffrey (1986). The Modern Photography Movement in Japan. In: Kuwahara Kineo (et al.), *Nihon shashin zenshū 3: Kindai shashin no gunzō* [Complete Collection of Photography in Japan 3: Modern Photography Movement in Japan]. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, p.186.

publications. Nevertheless, as Kafka would agree, it is precisely due to such a status and their ephemeral character that these publications can be seen as of significant value, reflecting their specific historical time-place in great intensity.[107] However, the situation is further complicated when the main texts constituting the discourse around Surrealism and photography in 1930s Japan are seen in a larger context of the magazines in which they would originally appear. They would support 'photo avant-garde' but cater equally to consumers and include state-supported political propaganda.

Figure 2.6: 'Number One Bachelor of the World: Adolf Hitler' and 'Introducing Deutschland', *Foto Taimusu*, April 1938, details.

For example, the same issue of the *Foto Taimusu* that featured Hanawa's 'Development of Surrealism in the Photographic Image' also included strong military propaganda: a photograph showing Adolf Hitler at a concert in Poland together with a feature titled 'Introducing Deutschland' (*Deutch land-no shōkai*) (Figure 2.6).[108] In the former case, Hitler is seen while greeting female members of the public from the stage, with the title reading 'Number One Bachelor of the World: Adolf Hitler' (*Sekai ichi no dokushinsha - Adorufu*

[107] For how artists' magazines are open to the contingency of history, as conditional, fragmented, and subjective in nature see: Allen, Gwen (2011). *Artists' Magazines: an Alternative Space for Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp. 10-11.
[108] The issue also included features appealing to amateur photographic public, in accordance with the editorial aims of introducing foreign photography to Japan, such as Nagata Isshū's writing on Edward Steichen, features on photomontage and advertisement photography.

Hittorā), promoting his persona as popular among the opposite sex. In the following feature, he is shown working on a construction site together with a group of children, in promotion of his efforts invested in building a prosperous future. In the same magazine volume, Hanawa's text would demonstrate the working of the Surrealist displacement technique and reveal photographic representation as prone to construction. Its inclusion in the same magazine issue with the examples of nationalist propaganda would thus ascribe it with immediate agency as offering a different, 'new' way of understanding visual culture. As this case was not the only occasion of such juxtapositions and as more of such examples will be presented in the following chapters, it becomes of importance to analyse them in further detail.

Under the circumstances, photographic magazines in 1930s Japan can be considered as a specific space where 'visuality' would be both constructed and deconstructed. For a prominent theorist of visual culture Nicholas Mirzoeff, visuality is precisely a space where authority is transmitted and disseminated and where history is visualised.[109] The space of photographic magazines can thus be understood as simultaneously offering the opportunity for 'countervisuality' or the process resituating the terms under which reality is mediated.[110] In other words, this situation can be understood as an example of how Surrealist photography in Japan receives a high level of agency precisely due to its marginalised status, intensified further by an equally marginalised status of the photographic magazines. Following a claim by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière of how 'politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it', the photographic magazines served as a space of what he terms as 'distribution of the sensible' simultaneously for Surrealist and propagandist visual content.[111] They can thus be perceived as a 'common ground' where not only a new visuality, or in Rancière's terms 'regime of visibility', was being forged but the existing one also being

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[109] Mirzoeff, Nicholas (2011). *The Right to Look: a Counterhistory of Visuality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p. 2.
[110] Ibid, p. 5.
[111] Rancière, Jacques ([2000] 2004). *The Politics of Aesthetics: the Distribution of the Sensible*. London: Continuum, p. 13.

disfigured.[112] For Surrealist photography in Japan, publishing work in the commercial space of the magazines was a compromise enforced by its reterritorialised existence outside of a single Surrealist group. However, such compromise simultaneously offered it a position of direct engagement with the type of visual material they would aim to discredit. Existence of a common ground where both avant-garde and propaganda imagery could coexist in Japan was enabled by the status of the magazines themselves, as situated on the margins of publicity, and by the gap existing between Surrealist practice and its camouflaged status (read between the lines of 'avant-garde').

This would be a significant deferral from the main context in which Surrealist photography would be distributed in Surrealist magazines in France. The first Surrealist journal *La Révolution surréaliste* developed in the decade that was equally marked by the rise of the illustrated press in France, at the time when commercial practice of photography became an intrinsic part of the urban environment.[113] It not only coincided with the proliferation of photography in the press, advertising and publishing but also deliberately subverted the tendency to fix their meanings when deployed in these industries.[114] Hence, the use of photography in the publication, presented as 'visual enigmas' dislocated from the text, displaced the status of the photojournalistic image, re-ascribing it with different meaning by accompanying texts and captions.[115] The subsequent periodicals: *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution*, *Documents* and *Minotaure* would for their most part prominently reflect changes within the organisation and priorities of the French group. *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution* would manifest the group's striving to align with the Communist Party and would therefore bring forth the interplay between poetics and politics more straightforwardly, making direct comments

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[112] Rancière, Jacques ([2003] 2007). *The Future of the Image*. London: New York: Verso, p. 83.
[113] For a detailed discussion of the relationship between Surrealist journals and the illustrated press in Europe and France see: Donkin, Hazel (2010). *Surrealism, Photography and the Periodical Press: an Investigation into the Use of Photography in Surrealist Publications (1924-1969) with Specific Reference to Themes of Sexuality and their Interaction with Commercial Photographic Images of the Period*. PhD thesis, Northumbria University, pp. 1-48.
[114] Ibid, p. 60
[115] Matthews, J.H. (1985). Modes of Documentation: Photography in *La Révolution surréaliste*. *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 38-40.

on French nationalism as propagated through the illustrated journal *Vu*.[116] The *Minotaure*, heavily drawing on the legacy of the dissident *Documents*, would deploy photographic image on equal basis with other forms of visual Surrealist expression, ascribing greater value to the medium.[117]

Due to a dispersed character of Surrealism in Japan, discourse on Surrealist photography was formulated primarily in the domain of the illustrated press. The mass media access granted to Surrealist photography under the condition that it was defined as 'avant-garde', can thus be observed as an extension of the chief means of operation of the Surrealist image, at least in retrospect. Namely, Surrealist practice was taking advantage of realistic properties of photography to subvert a limited understanding of everyday experience and reveal the immanence of 'surreality' within reality.[118] This was achieved not only by the image manipulation but also by a range of tactics, including the use of captioning and accompanying texts and juxtaposition with other photographs, aiming to disrupt predominating orders of meaning against which they were normally read.[119] Surrealist tactics for disturbing the meaning of documentary photography involved displacing existing, 'straight' photographs into unfamiliar contexts, such as the space of the Surrealist publications.[120] Such photographs would rarely operate on their own, without interconnectedness with other media of the Surrealist action, including poetry, painting, questionnaires, editorial selection of images and texts and so forth. Therefore, the practice of situating Surrealist photographs firstly in the 'avant-garde' framework and then into a wider photographic and finally mass-media context exemplifies a significant shift in terms of how the images would not only be distributed but viewed by the public in Japan.[121] The status of Surrealist photography in Japan can thus be regarded as an extension of

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[116] Donkin, Hazel (2010), p.110.
[117] Matthews, J.H. (1985), p. 45. The publication also reflected the great international exposure that Surrealism gained in the 1930s, as per: Donkin, Hazel (2010), pp. 141-142.
[118] Breton, André ([1928] 1972). *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: Harper and Row, p. 46
[119] Walker, Ian (2002). *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 12-13.
[120] Sheringham, Michael (2006). *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*. Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, p. 87.
[121] An example of a purely mass media context is discussed in the following Chapter 3.

Surrealist displacement strategy, while it is not the straight photograph that is displaced by a Surrealist context but the mass media context that is displaced by Surrealist photography. This situation may be understood as what Donald Richie claims to be a specific characteristic of the Japanese avant-garde, which is 'at once incorporated in the taste of the masses, so strong is the lure of the new'.[122] The category of 'newness' reappears in this context as a seeming echo to the main claim of breaking with traditionalism posed by European avant-gardes.[123] However, it should be remembered that in Japan 'newness' was already established in the concept of the modernist *shinkō*, and that the two were often confused. Such a situation brings forth a problem of authenticating avant-garde practice in Japan, which was questioned on many occasions, similarly to Surrealism.[124] Therefore, the specific situation in which Surrealist photography in Japan was positioned as a minor formation, both with regard to what was considered as 'new' and 'avant-garde', reframes them in a proposal that they did not only mirror or mimic the systems of values and social formations imported from abroad but have had their unique positions within the country's specific modernity.[125] Integration with society in the domain of mass media points to what Peter Eckersall terms the 'discursive hybridity' of the historical avant-garde in Japan, as it offers an intertwining and

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[122] Richie, Donald (2005). Forward. In: Kawabata, Yasunari ([1928] 2005). *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. xxv.
[123] As per: Calinescu, Matei (1974). *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kistch, Postmodernism*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 117.
[124] For instance, Miki Tamon claimed how: 'Not only surrealism but also avant-garde movements in Japan in general, unlike those in Europe, had no definite basis of rationalism and realism to rebel against. The artists during this period, therefore, could make no further development than attempt experiments individually, finding in European modern art clues to their own creation', as per: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan (ed.) (1975). *Shururearisumu* ten [Exhibition of Surrealism] (Exh.Cat.). Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, unpaginated. A counterargument to this claim was offered on the occasion of the Pompidou Centre's exhibition *Japon des Avant Gardes 1910-1970* (1987), as the authors of the accompanying catalogue claimed how 'in reality, the world is absolutely littered by modernities and by practicing artists, who never regarded modernism as the secure possession of the West' and 'the history of avant-garde movements in Japan since approximately 1910 cannot be seen as a set of distant, more or less late and sometimes unnatural echoes of the different artistic currents in European countries', as per: Centre Georges Pompidou (ed.) (1986). *Japon des avant gardes*, *1910-1970*: *Exposition* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, pp. 21-23.
[125] For how 'Surrealist practice in Japan can be seen to reframe the narrative of Japanese modernization as an imposition of values from a hegemonic West' see: Sas, Miryam (1999). *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Surrealism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 35.

simultaneous forging of systems that would be considered as divorced in the European context.[126]

The particular condition that allowed the appearance of Surrealist photography in a wide range of mass media, especially in 1938, was reflective of the political situation, summarised in a recommendation: 'Be as active as you want, just avoid what you must avoid'.[127] Compromising of explicit political agency on the side of Surrealist photographers, attested to in dismissal of the political use of the word 'avant-garde' at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium, as well as readiness of the magazine editors to publish radical content for the sake of profit, would be established manners for avoiding state censorship of the time and would frame a 'paradoxical relationship between radicalism and complicity'.[128] Such a process can be seen as a case study in deterritorialisation of Surrealist practice and reterritorialisation within the photographic and mass media contexts in Japan due to political oppression and the absence of a single Surrealist group, but can also be understood as an active agent. Reterritorialised Surrealist content operating from within the photographic magazines can thus be regarded as *deterritorialising*, disturbing and reconfiguring the visual literacy of the culture at the time. In such an active sense, a function of Surrealist photography in Japan can be viewed as what Arthur Danto terms as 'transfiguration of the commonplace', bringing the banal, fictional or the invisible to life or to vision.[129] As it was established in the previous chapter, such 'bringing to vision' of unmediated states of the unconscious mind was the chief aim of automatism. In Breton's words, this complex situation resulting from the presence of Surrealist texts and images within the mass media in 1930s Japan would thus achieve a true 'bewildering

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[126] Eckersall, Peter (2006). From Liminality to Ideology: The Politics of Embodiment in Prewar Avant-Garde Theatre in Japan. In: Harding, James and Rouse, John (eds.), *Not the Other Avant-Garde*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 233-234.
[127] Clark, John (1994). Abstract Subjectivity in the Taisho and early Showa Avant-Garde. In: Munroe, Alexandra (ed.), *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (Exh. Cat.). New York: H.N. Abrams, p. 48. For how 'Surrealist artists who were politically conscious were, in most cases, aware of the deliberately radical content of their work, and were careful about their public pronouncements' see: Ibid, p. 50.
[128] Hutchinson, Rachael (2013). *Negotiating Censorship in Modern Japan*. London: Routledge, p. 6.
[129] Danto, Arthur C. (1981). *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Cambridge, Mass.: University of Harvard Press, pp. v-vi.

sensation', or 'derangement of senses' that he called for in his Prague address.[130] Producing the sensation, however, should not be understood as coincidental but as deliberately aimed towards the same goal of 'liberating the mind' as in automatism.

[130] Breton, André ([1934], 1978). What is Surrealism?. In: Rosemont, Franaklin (ed.), *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*. New York: Monad: Distributed by Pathfinder Press, p. 263.

Chapter 3

Montages *in situ*: Undoing representation in staged photography

The Avant-Garde Photography Symposium took place following an exhibition of the Naniwa Photography Club in Tokyo in 1938 and photographs by the club's members Yasui Nakaji, Ueda Bizan, Hanawa Gingo, Hirai Terushichi, Koishi Kiyoshi, Tarui Yoshio and Hattori Yoshibumi were also shown and discussed at the meeting. As the discussion took a direction of criticising the work by the Kansai photographers by the Tokyo club, it did not acknowledge a number of specific characteristics of the images on display, and most importantly their investment into the Surrealist object experiments.[1]

The main disagreement seemingly appearing within the contextualisation of Surrealist photography as 'avant-garde' concerned its technical manifestations, with the straight shot, directed photograph and photo-collage appearing as the chief means of practice. However, this argument took place on the surface of more deeply rooted issues that were motivating the application of the Surrealist object strategy, as much as among Surrealist photographers in Japan as within the international Surrealist circles of the 1930s. The following two chapters will focus on images discussed at the symposium to reframe the argument that seemed to be formulating around the meaning of 'avant-garde' photography through a lens of purely Surrealist engagement. They will argue how it reflected on more exigent concerns, and attempted to undo spatial and temporal linearity of photographic representation as a means of offering a critique to the concomitant conditions of society, culture and politics. Whereas the following chapter will reveal the extent to which the same preoccupation informed the practice in Nagoya and Tokyo, this chapter will concern itself primarily with the production of Osaka photographers.

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[1] For how the 'Tokyo group criticized the Naniwa exhibition and the Kansai group defended it' see: Takeba, Joe (2003). The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.), *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 151.

Photographs of still lives

Hanawa Gingo's 'New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life' appeared in the September 1938 issue of the *Asahi Kamera*, simultaneously with the report from the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium.[2] The text provides a valuable source of information for a better understanding of the images exhibited and discussed at the occasion, especially when viewed in relation to Hanawa's other writings in 1938 and photographs included in the compilation *Light* (*Hikari*), a volume published to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Tampei Photo Club in 1940.[3] The very title of the article acknowledged Yasui Nakaji as a central figure behind the production of Osaka-based clubs (Naniwa Photography Club, Tampei Photography Club and Avant-Garde Image Group). Although Hanawa would make sure to indicate how the word 'still life' originated from German *stilleben*, it should be understood as a reference to a method that Yasui termed as 'semi-still life' in 1932.[4] A co-member of the Naniwa club, Hanawa reported how Yasui has coined the term to describe his own practice of arranging objects for the camera in a monthly publication of the club.[5] According to Mitsuda Yuri, there is no doubt that Yasui's term resulted from his interest in Surrealism, and especially in the displacement strategy.[6] This interest is evident in his description of the 'semi-still life' as a 'situation that can bring forward a more truthful consciousness to that of shallow appearances' as the aim of his effort to complicate the systems of pictorial signification and provoke a feeling how things are 'out of joint' (*iwakan*).[7]

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[2] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001). Seibutsu no shashinga no shinhatten [New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 218-222.
[3] Iizawa Kōtaro, Kaneko Ryūichi and Tampei Photography Club (eds.) ([1940] 2006). *Hikari* [Light]. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai.
[4] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001), p. 218.
[5] Mitsuda Yuri (2004). Yasui Nakaji riarusa no hate - shashin ōgonki no kyojin [Yasui Nakaji, the End of Reality – Giant of Photography's Golden Age]. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha, p. 14.
[6] Ibid, p. 15.
[7] Ibid, pp. 14-15.

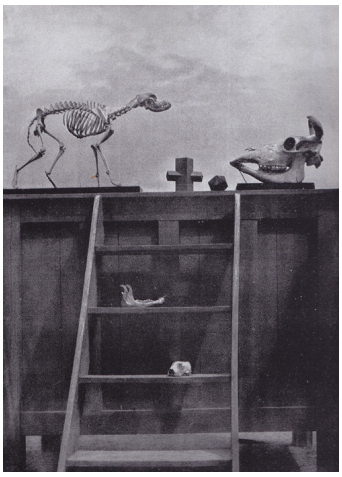
Figure 3.1: Yasui Nakaji, *Butterfly*, 1938.

Figure 3.2: Kawasaki Kametarō, *Sacred Torch*, 1940.

Mitsuda asserts how as an avid reader of French, Yasui started working under a strong impact of Brassaï as early as 1934, being familiar with his photography collection *Paris at Night* (*Paris de nuit*, 1933) and exposed to his photographs through subscription to the *Minotaure*.[8] A motif that acknowledged this relationship is that of a butterfly, also appearing in one of the three photographs that Yasui showed at the Tokyo exhibition and titled *Butterfly* (Figure 3.1).[9] An arrangement of objects placed on top of wooden floorboards, it takes its title from a butterfly seen in the image together with a large mineral specimen and two potted models of sea anemone, the latter also reflecting in shadow over the texture of the floorboards. Yasui was a founding member of the Tampei club in 1930 together with Ueda Bizan and supported an initiative of younger photographers such as Hanawa and Hirai Terushichi to establish the Avant-Garde Image Group in 1937, put together by members of both the Naniwa and the Tampei clubs. Regardless of the membership to the separate branches, photographers in Osaka worked in close relationships and exhibited together. Yasui is known to have encouraged the members of all Osaka clubs to experiment with objects so as to structure images with a 'fantastical effect', in his understanding of the 'semi-

[8] Ibid, p. 15.
[9] For how the earliest *Butterfly* (1934) aimed to capture a feeling of an encounter with a visitor from a different world that Yasui experienced seeing it at his window in evening light see: Mitsuda Yuri (2004), p. 15. Reproductions of Brassaï's photographs of butterflies were featured in the June 1937 issue of the *Atelier* as well as in Takiguchi's article 'Photography and Surrealism' (*Foto Taimusu*, April 1938) discussed in the previous Chapter 2.

still life' as 'a constructive process by which one harmonises the inharmonious'.[10] Yasui would also initiate the experiments by organising group shooting sessions. In one of such sessions in 1937, photographers of the Tampei club rented a primary school in which they made use of a number of objects from its science study room, including models of sea anemone, samples of minerals and a cow bone, two of which are seen in Yasui's *Butterfly* (1938).[11] The image can thus be understood as combining the artist's earlier interest in Surrealist potential of the butterfly motif with a focused practice of staged photography that experimented with objects, so as to displace them from their original context. The collective shooting sessions also resulted in frequent use of the same objects by different photographers and thus the sea anemone can also be seen in Kawasaki Kametarō's *Sacred Torch* in the *Light* album (Figure 3.2).



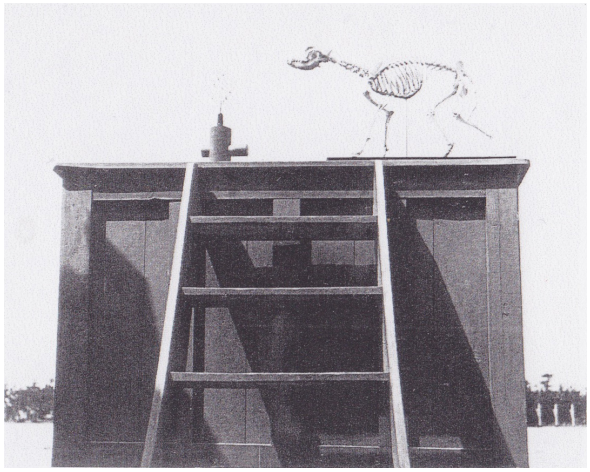


Figure 3.3: Hirai Terushichi, *Altar*, 1938.

Figure 3.4: Yasui Nakaji, *Composition*, 1938.

Hirai's practice can be similarly identified as developing alongside Yasui's experiments with the displacement strategy and in the process of collective shooting sessions. For instance, Hirai's image included in Hanawa's 'New Developments' distinctly features a similar use of the same objects in staging of different photographs by the two photographers. The image is titled *Altar*

[10] Iizawa Kōtarō ([1942] 2005). Nakaji Yasui: A Contemporary. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji sakuhinshū* [Yasui Nakaji Collection of Works]. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, p. 7. I rely on Iizawa's text for Hanawa's report on Yasui's construction of the phrase in 1932.
[11] Mitsuda Yuri (2004), p. 16.

(*Saidan*) and shows a cow bone and a dog skeleton, sourced in the primary school's science study room, placed on both sides of a cross on a stage reached by a staircase, with smaller objects placed on its steps so as to lead the gaze upwards (Figure 3.3). Yasui's rendition of the same scene is titled simply *Composition* (*Kōsei*) and shows the same dog skeleton placed on the same stage and atop the same staircase, this time within a wider shot and with only one other object complementing construction of the image (Figure 3.4).[12] Hanawa acknowledged the relationship between Hirai and Yasui in the 'New Developments'. He writes:

> We can refer to the following group as the 'school of a school' (*gakkō-ha*). Its representatives are all members of the Tampei club, firstly Hirai Terushichi who can be called 'a leader of garbage art' (*garakuta geijutsu no hatagashira*), followed by Iwasa Sadao, and others. The 'chief figure of strange things' (*getemono no ōgosho*) Yasui Nakaji is also a candidate.[13]

Humorously suggesting how Hirai is 'a leader of garbage art' and Yasui is a 'chief figure of strange things' Hanawa also makes a subtle cynical comment in the construction of the phrase 'school of a school'. In a play of words indicating location of the shoot, he also applies a suffix *ha* used in Japanese to signify artistic movements, and thus points out a marginalised position of the photo clubs.[14] The tone is maintained in his description of the atmosphere during the day, referred to as a production of 'school art'.[15] The article thus

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[12] The cow bone seen in Hirai's *Altar* was featured in several Yasui's images, including *Cow Bone* and *Monument,* both from 1938.
[13] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001), p. 218.
[14] For instance, Futurism would be referred to in Japanese as *Mirai-ha* and Cubism as *Rittai-ha*. The suffix would also be applied to Surrealism at times, as *Chōgenjitsu-ha* although any 'ism' at the end of a word would normally be designated with *shugi*, as in *Chōgenjitsu-shugi* for Surrealism or *Kyōsan-shugi* for Marxism. Two main 'schools' of art fostered by the Ministry of Education at the time were called *Zaiya-ha* and *Kanten-ha* and the term would have originated in Japanese history of art prior to the twentieth century.
[15] The article opens with two images by Kakimoto Kiichi, which are referred to as a 'school of a beach'. It proceeds with two images by Hirai and four by Hanawa, which are referred to as the 'school of a school' and whose sub-division is titled 'mannequin art'. The final category is referred to as a 'school of a table', with Hanawa and Honjo Kōrō as examples. Three locations provided in the text: that of the beach, the school and the 'table' indicate the most frequent sites of collaborative shooting sessions. There are sixteen images in the text, also including examples of Arp's and Selligmann's artworks and a commercial photograph as the analysis of still life photography in general terms follows from the initial examples by the Osaka photographers, as per: Ibid, pp. 218-222.

introduces in a humorous manner the application of Yasui's 'semi-still life', whereas his interest in Surrealism frames the practice as essentially that of staged photography, of constructing situations specifically for the camera as a method of experimenting with the Surrealist objects.[16] Hanawa pointed out how technical requirements of the method involved three elements: gathering of desired objects (arrangement), choosing camera angle, and setting up an adequate light.[17] However, he noted that the approach did not differ significantly from other means of practice, as in advertisement photography, and that it did not suffice in itself. Rather, he insisted how a direct reason that informed a 'golden age' of still life photography resulted from a 'new practice of embracing the Surrealist movement in Japan since the last year'.[18]

Although this statement rooted the practice of staged photography in exploration of the Surrealist objects, Hanawa did not define Surrealism himself but ascribed to definitions offered previously by Takiguchi and Sakata. He quoted Takiguchi Shūzō in that Surrealism would be contained in the 'deep folds of the everyday', but added that it was also described by Sakata Minoru as a 'disassembly of reality under commonly accepted reason and its reassembly under pure intuition', and also as a 'transformation of the internal reality laying behind the external'.[19] He established how the Surrealist practice extends across all artistic media, including painting, sculpture and poetry, and could be exemplified in the works by Hans Arp and Kurt Seligmann. He also listed photographic works by Man Ray and Hans Bellmer, whom he identified as revolutionising the production of still lives in photography.[20] Finally, he concluded by saying how photographing still lives was only in its initial phase and how there were talks of a joint exhibition among the members of Osaka's Avant-Garde Image Group, Tokyo's Avant-Garde Photography Association

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[16] For how 'sculptures, assemblies and installations' could be used as alternative terms to 'still life' with regard to staged photography applying dolls, figures, animals or inanimate objects see: Kohler, Michael (1995). Arranged, Constructed and Staged – from Taking to Making Pictures. In: Kohler, Michael (et al.), *Constructed Realities: The Art of Staged Photography*. Zurich, Switzerland: Edition Stemmle, p. 16.
[17] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001), p. 220.
[18] Ibid, p. 221.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

and the Nagoya Avant-Garde Club, which should allow further development of the practice.[21]

The 'Surrealist Situation of the Object', André Breton's address to an audience gathered for his visit to Prague in 1935, established the research into objects as a definitive focus of Surrealism during the decade.[22] It reaffirmed Breton's view expressed in Brussels in the previous year how it was the most pressing issue driving Surrealist activity. In the speech, he reminded the audience how he called for creation of 'certain objects that one approaches only in dreams' as early as in the *Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality* (*Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité*, 1924), inviting deliberate construction of individual perception through representation.[23] Reproduction of dream-work in reality thus aimed to destabilise the understanding of an artwork as mimetic but also to directly intervene into reality, 'bringing to life' a specific vision exactly by the creation of specific types of objects. Hanawa's article establishes the existence of a coherent practice related to the Surrealist object research among photographers in Japan as early as in 1932. It also shows how the rising preoccupation with the Surrealist object was a concern of joint interest to practitioners of different amateur clubs and how there was an initiative to consolidate their activities and materialise them in the form of an exhibition. In this way, Hanawa locates explicitly the collective production of still life photography among various members of Osaka clubs within a wider discursive field concerning production of the Surrealist object-photographs, in relation to similar practices in Tokyo and Nagoya.

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[21] Ibid, p. 222.
[22] Breton, Andre ([1935] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 255-278.
[23] Ibid, pp. 277-278.

Figure 3.5: Hanawa Gingo, *Untitled*, 1938.

Figure 3.6: Ueda Bizan, *Gift to a Woman*, 1939.

The collective shoot at the primary school was followed by another session organised at a mannequin factory in Kyoto soon afterwards, which Hanawa referred to as the 'mannequin art' in 'New Developments'.[24] The main difference between the two days that he pointed out was that the factory also allowed the photographers to capture eroticism as they were exposed to dismembered mannequin parts, whereas he singled out Ueda's work as the best example of this difference.[25] A photograph that Hanawa provides as an example of the 'mannequin art' in the text is untitled and shows two mannequin hands placed in the ground and arranged in relation to a shell and a piece of wire in construction of a female figure (Figure 3.5). A sample of Ueda's work from the shoot can be seen in *Gift to a Woman* (*Josei he no okurimono*) from the January 1939 issue of the *Kamera Kurabu*, also making use of mannequin hands in construction of a fictional narration suggested in the title (Figure 3.6).

[24] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001), p. 220.
[25] Ibid.

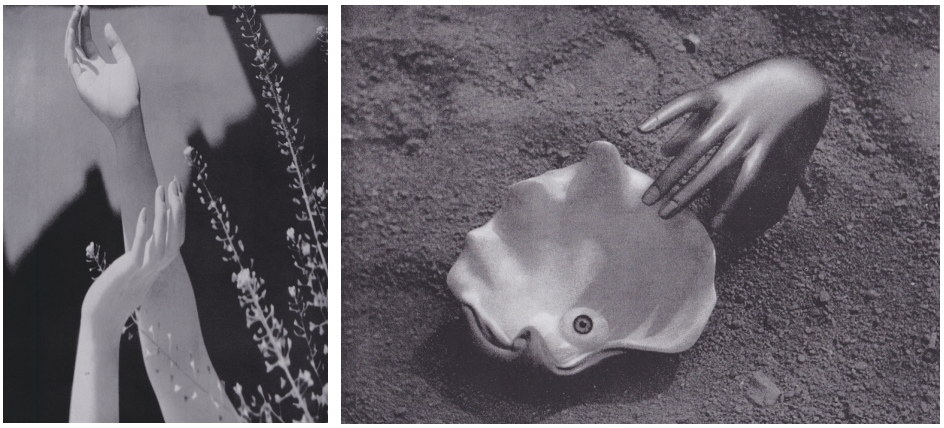

Figure 3.7: Kita Yoichirō, *Hands*, 1940.

Figure 3.8: Kawasaki Kametarō, *Hand*, 1938.

Several other images included in the *Light* attest to how mannequin hands were of a special interest in suggesting erotic encounters by the use of dismembered mannequin parts at the factory shooting session. For example, they can also be seen in Kita Yoichirō's *Hands*, this time in a close-up view evoking an invisible body laid down in the field (Figure 3.7). The photographs produced in the session would be published in varied magazines. Kawasaki Kametarō would thus contribute another photograph of a displaced mannequin hand to the July 1938 issue of the *Home Life*, alongside Hirai's *Altar*. Entitled simply *Hand* (*Te*), the shot offers another rendition of Hanawa's untitled arrangement, with a mannequin hand seen in an inviting gesture placed above a sea shell containing a model of a human eye, again in substitution of an invisible body (Figure 3.8).

Such application of mannequin parts towards a release of erotic desire can be read as a use of the displacement strategy towards a personal expression of sexuality, evoking Sigmund Freud's writing about the technique in a number of texts, including *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *The Joke and Its Relation to Unconscious* (1905). Also, Hanawa's reference to Bellmer's work in 'New Developments' places these photographs in a relation to his famous series *The Doll* (1934), in which the artist produced a study of doll's parts disassembled and reassembled in different variations. Hal Foster's well-known reading of this series underlined its potency for the liberation of desire, also stressing its close relation to fetishism, as defined by Freud in *Three*

Essays in the Theory of Sexuality (1905).[26] However, the main Surrealist critics in Japan, Takiguchi and Yamanaka Chirū, perceived Bellmer's photographs in the aftermath of their inclusion in the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* as a case study in staged photography. Takiguchi discussed them in such terms at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium.[27] Similarly, in 'The Fantasy of Bellmer's Dolls' published in the October 1939 issue of the *Atelier*, Yamanaka divided the process of the artist's work into four phases: making clear the assembled character of the doll by dislocating its parts, identifying the parts artistically, rearranging them in a new composition and assigning them a new meaning by a photograph. [28] He described the fourth phase as potentially expressing a kind of 'sadistic love' but proceeded to read Bellmer's original writing to establish how the primary goal of the photographs was to show a 'hidden, different' world.[29]

A significant feature of the photographs produced at the mannequin factory site becomes the reappearing hand motif. As Matsuda Kazuko's recent study showed, the hand motif was deployed in Surrealism across different media, including photography, and its main feature was that once dislocated from a body it would assume a status of an independent object.[30] The motif comes to stand for a variety of references in Surrealism, as it assumes independency from the body and becomes an autonomous object. It thus points out the Surrealist assigning of primacy to an individual mind in the industrial age of mass production.[31] These propositions, that the hand motif operates as an

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[26] Foster, Hal (2001). Violation and Veiling in Surrealist Photography: Woman as Fetish, as Shattered Object, as Phallus. In: Mundy, Jenifer (et al.), *Surrealism: Desire Unbound*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, p. 206.
[27] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001), p. 239. For how Bellmer's series was primarily interested in transgression of boundaries between reality and fantasy, or self and other, see: Grant, Catherine (2010). Bellmer's Legs: Adolescent Pornography and Uncanny Eroticism in the Photographs of Hans Bellmer and Anna Gaskell. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 8, pp. 5-6 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal8/acrobat%20files/Articles/Bellmer's%20legs%20final%2018.05.10.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[28] Yamanaka Chirū ([1939] 1999). Berumeru no ningyō gesō [The Fantasy of Bellmer's Dolls]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanka Chirū 1930 nendai no organaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 442-446.
[29] With 'sadistic love' referred to as *sadistiku-na ai*, as per: Ibid, p. 442.
[30] Matsuda Kazuko (2006). *Shururearisumu to 'te'* [Surrealism and 'Hand]. Tokyo: Sueiseisha, pp. 18-19.
[31] Powell, Kirsten H. (1997). Hands-On Surrealism. *Art History*, Vol. 20, No. 4, p. 531.

individual object and thus points out the individuality of a subject, become of a special relevance when the practice of Osaka photographers is read against a rhetorical homogenisation of the nation, taking place in Japan at the same time. As a defining factor for the development of sovereignty, the idea of a 'ruling power incorporated within a body' of the Emperor was grounded in collectivisation of the nation.[32] Slogans that were used to promote the idea of a single 'national body' (*kokutai*), unifying all its citizens as embodied in a figure of the Emperor, included 'one hundred million hearts beating as one' (*ichioku isshin*), asking for a complete surrendering of the self to the nation in its war efforts.[33] The idea was made official with the publication of the *Fundamentals of Our National Polity* (*kokutai no hongi*), a pamphlet issued by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1937, which drew on previous ideas of a 'family state' in order to provide an ethical grounding for the forthcoming war mobilisation.[34] The hand motif would thus imply not only individualisation of the subject, taking up an independent position in acquiring characteristics of a Surrealist object, but would also presuppose a critical potential of an image to offer an alternative, or 'different' world-view. However, such individualisation of the subject cannot be established solely on the basis of the use of a hand motif in the practice of Osaka photographers, as in the largest part of the photographs it is used primarily to point at a constructed and an assembled view of the body.

With Hanawa's references to Man Ray's and Bellmer's works, the practice also invokes a well-know Surrealist strategy of using mannequins as tools of social critique.[35] A 'mannequin', however, would also be invested with specific

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[32] For how the idea of two bodies of a king (natural body and body politics) developed also in medieval Europe see: Steyerl, Hito (2012). *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, p. 143. For the relevance of the 'Emperor System' in the context of Japanese art history see: Bloom, Lisa (2002). Gender, Race and Nation in Japanese Contemporary Art and Criticism. In: Mirzoeff, Nicholas (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 218-219.

[33] Tiampo, Ming (2011). *Gutai: Decentring Modernism.* Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, p. 41.

[34] Iida, Yumiko (2002). *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 18-20. For how the 'Fundamentals' were sold in two million copies, significantly outreaching its initial print of 300.000 see: Ibid, p. 20.

[35] The best-known example is the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in Paris (1938. For a detailed account of this exhibition see: Kachur, Lewis (2001). *Displaying the Marvellous: Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations*. Cambridge, Mass.:

cultural meanings in the 'recoded' Japanese modernity. For instance, the chief protagonist of Kawabata's *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*, named Yuki, calls her self 'a mannequin of Asakusa', revealing how it symbolised a passive and a consumerist character of the 'modern girl' and connoted an 'erotic' part of the catch-phrase 'erotic, grotesque, nonsense'.[36] The use of mannequin parts in representing primarily a female body can thus be related to Ei-Kyū's earlier use of magazine cut outs to provide a voyeuristic experience of the 'woman as body in parts', and also evokes the interests of the New Sensibilities School from the turn of the decade.

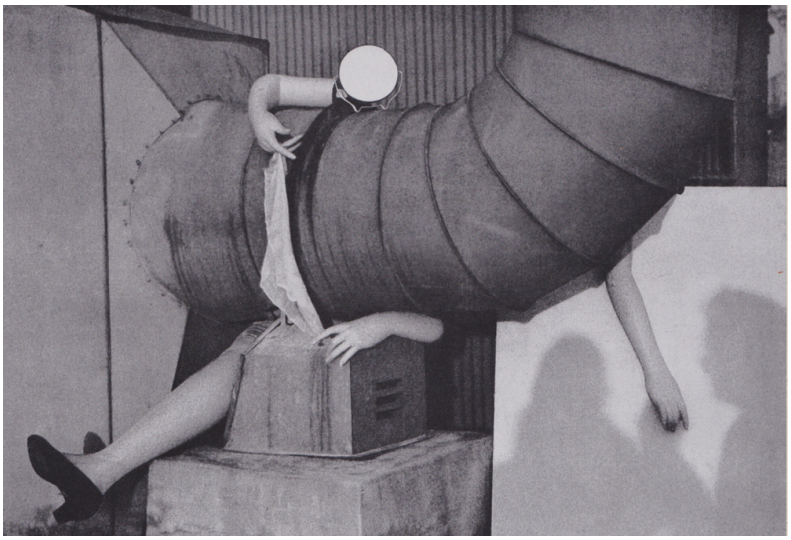

Figure 3.9: Ueda Bizan, *Delighted*, 1940.

The interest, not only in the motif of the hand but into rendering views of the body (of a mannequin) as disfigured and rendered in parts, is best seen in another of Ueda's photographs from the *Light*, titled *Delighted* (Figure 3.9). It shows mannequin parts assembled around a large pipe with a mirror positioned in the place of the head and with a hand seemingly touching two

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MIT Press, pp. 37-67. For another detailed discussion of the status of mannequins in French culture of the 1920s and 1930s see: Grongerg, Tag (1997). Beware Beautiful Women: The 1920s Shopwindow Mannequin and a Physiognomy of Effacement. *Art History*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 375-396.

[36] Silverberg, Miriam (2006). *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 194. Fascination with mannequins in photographic practices of the day can be evidenced outside of the particular session organised by the members of the Osaka club. For example, see: Hara Masatsugu (1937). Manekin [Mannequin]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 14, No. 5, pp. 16-17. See also: Hara Masatsugu (1938). Manekin wo utsusu [Taking Photographs of Mannequins]. *Shashin Geppō*, May Edition, pp. 557-561.

shadows reflected on the wall, suggesting its animate character and an ability of communication. As Elza Adamowicz has noted, overtly constructed representations of the body were well known to Surrealists and can be identified in a wider scope of Surrealist activity and not only in the famous series of dolls produced by Bellmer.[37] Through the processes of both displacement and reassembly of body parts, the strategy is applied towards 'elaboration of a radically new vision, a mode of creating the surreal by transgressing the limits of existing codes of representation', as also suggested by Yamanaka.[38] Thus, although fragmentation of the body explored at the collective shoot at the Kyoto factory points at experimenting with erotic desire, it was grounded in a wider interest into staged photography and its potential to undo representation. The practice was thus immanently critical of the social and political conditions, but not only in terms of figuration. Its primary concern was how is an image used as a means of communicating social and cultural meanings and this interest can be observed in a wider context of this practice.

The main figurative trope through which Adamowicz reads the Surrealist bodily constructions is the displacement of classical statues, which takes place in two different phases: firstly by their removal from an established position on the 'pedestal', as symbols of institutionalised power, and secondly by reconfiguration into new assemblages in different artistic media.[39] Displacement of a statue is only possible against an established signification in the cultural and social context. In the case of Europe, this takes place through the tradition of classical and Renaissance painting, a subject of much criticism in the Surrealist strategy of bodily fragmentation. Such a characteristic of the representation of displaced statues is affirmed by Breton, as he writes how for a statue 'to be really disoriented, it must first have lived a conventional life, in its conventional place'.[40] As displacement of classical statues operates on a subversion of 'familiar landmarks' it requires existence

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[37] For how a similar strategy was applied by both Magritte and Ernst see: Adamowicz, Elza (1998). *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 168.
[38] Ibid, p. 160.
[39] Ibid, pp. 163-173.
[40] Breton, André ([1929] 1999). *Break of Day*. Translated by Mark Polizzotti and Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 48.

of ‘iconic symbols or literary or pictorial conventions’.[41] Classical aesthetics suggested in the images of statues is disrupted primarily for its identification with ‘unity’ and ‘harmony’ and is instead replaced by ‘an assemblage of fragments’ and by the ‘proliferation of details’.[42] If the ‘unity’ in Japan were understood to represent the governmental program promoting a singular ‘national body’, the strategy can thus be seen as equally aimed at the same goal of its disruption, using a potential of reterritorialised cultural meanings towards such end.

Figure 3.10: Yasui Nakaji, *Composition: Venus*, 1938.

Figure 3.11: Hirai Terushichi, *Face*, 1940.

Several images produced by Yasui and Hirai in the collective shooting sessions evidence their interest in the specific motif of classical statues. Yasui shows a head statue of Venus in *Composition: Venus* from 1938, placing it upon the ground and in relation with a round shaped stone and a cow bone (Figure 3.10). Hirai experiments with the same motif (and possibly the same statue) in several images, one of which is titled *Face* and appears in the *Light* (Figure 3.11). In this case, a broken statue is rendered in a close-up and juxtaposed with a small object placed atop of the pupil. The accompanying note to the image reads ‘‘Venus’s sorrow’, a far-away myth came softly to my

[41] Adamowicz, Elza (2000). Hats or Jellyfish? Andre Breton’s Collages. In: Fotiade, Ramona (ed.), *André Breton: The Power of Language*. Exeter: Elm Bank, p. 93.
[42] Adamowicz, Elza (1998), pp. 167

dream', suggesting the state of dreaming as the origin of the composition.[43] In a lecture given in 1941, Yasui speculated how the broken face of the statue in this photograph stimulated thinking about its other, absent half.[44] The holistic approach, in which the broken status of the statue was considered by separation from an imagined whole was complemented with an explanation of how the small black object seen beneath the eye of the statue is a spatula (*tamajaku*) and that the arrangement draws out its beauty from the unrelated characters of the two objects. He concluded how such photographs should make clear to people that photography was not a narrow discipline, and that although it might be a new technique it was only another medium that can be used in the exercise of critical thinking.[45] Clearly, Yasui was referring to Comte De Lautréamont's definition of beauty achieved in stark juxtapositions as a source of the image's visual power and ascribed it an active agency in reformulating social and political perception. This power was invested in photography by its use within Surrealism on the same grounds as any other Surrealist image. Defined against the poetic imagination of Pierre Reverdy and Lautréamont, such an image was not understood as static and passive but rather aimed to reveal new modes of perception.[46] At the lecture, the agency of Surrealist photography was also indicated in a comparison of *Face* to a work produced by André and Jacqueline Breton entitled *Le petit mimétique* (referred to in Japanese as *Chīsana gitai*), and shown in Japan at the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*.

As Steven Harris has pointed out, this work was one of the key objects produced in response to a growing disagreement between Breton's and

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[43] Iizawa Kōtaro, Kaneko Ryūichi and Tampei Photography Club (eds.) ([1940] 2006), p. 151.
[44] Yasui Nakaji ([1941] 2001). Shashin no hattatsu to sono geijutsuteki shōsō [Development of Photography and its Artistic Aspects]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 539. For how highly politically charged the atmosphere of this lecture was in the year when Surrealists were arrested throughout the country see: Nakajima Norihiro (2004). Shashin no 'radikarusa' ['Radicalism' in Photography]. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha, pp. 245-247.
[45] Yasui Nakaji ([1941] 2001), p. 539.
[46] For how a Surrealist image can assert 'other relationships than those generally, or, indeed provisionally established between human beings on the one hand and, on the other, things considered as accepted facts' see: Breton, André ([1928] 1972). *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: Harper and Row, p. 26.

Salvador Dalí's different conceptualisations of the Surrealist object, one of the defining characteristics of the movement in the 1930s.[47] An arrangement of natural objects resembling a face, it was produced by Bretons for the *Surrealist Exhibition of Objects*, a definitive show that established the importance of the Surrealist object experiments that took place at the Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris in 1936. The 'Theory of the Surrealist object', articulated in Breton's 1935 address, was complicated with Dalí's formulation of the paranoiac-critical method. His development of the method resulted from several years of investigation into how automatism and the dream narrative could be best articulated visually after his inclusion in the French Surrealist group in 1929.[48] This investigation was initially celebrated by Breton and in 1935 he described it through the notion of a 'double image', formulated by Dalí as a representation of an object that 'is at the same time the representation of another object that is absolutely different'.[49] In this method, Dalí suggested an interventionist possibility of objects, aimed not only at reconstructing the dream-work in material form but also at transforming material reality.[50] The tension in the discourse created between Breton's insistence on grounding the relation between dreams and automatism in poetic images and Dalí's call for an active production of visual objectifications of the unconscious mind, coincided with the change of Surrealism's relation to the realm of politics. Preoccupation with the Surrealist object came as a proposition of an art production that would offer an alternative to the politicisation of the cultural sphere, viewed by the Surrealists as a 'mistaken conception, both theoretically and historically impossible'.[51] The tension was chiefly based on the issue of production of images, as for Breton automatism demanded primacy of the verbal image whereas Dalí's paranoiac-critical method advocated for its independent operation in the visual domain, outside

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[47] For how the object was made in pair with *Le grand panoïque* see: Harris, Steven (2004). *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 182.
[48] Ades, Dawn (1992). *Dalí*. New York: Thames and Hudson, p.73.
[49] Harris, Steven (2004), p. 274.
[50] Malt, Johanna (2004). *Surrealist Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, p. 85.
[51] Ibid, p. 60.

of language.[52] Whereas Yasui's comment in 1941 would implicitly side with Breton in this discussion by referring to *Le petit mimétique*, Dalí's argument is of great resonance with the practice of Osaka photographers. His comment on the potential of reinforcing critical thinking that is presented to photography by the Surrealist object affirms how the practice would aim to offer a critique of representation, revealing the photographic image as equally constructed as the body and assigning it a potential of politically effective action when released in the social domain.

Collapse of the given

Figure 3.12: Yasui Nakaji, *Suit Jacket*, 1938.

Figure 3.13: Hanawa Gingo, *Factory Gentleman*, 1938.

The experiments with the Surrealist object strategy in Osaka went beyond the application of mannequin parts and included substituting an absented body with a number of different objects. One of the methods applied was that of using clothes, again established in Yasui's practice and described by

[52] Harris, Steven (2004), p. 180. For how 'emphasis on the image itself' was already made visible in the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (1929) see: Ades, Dawn (1992), p. 70.

Hanawa. For example, Yasui's *Suit Jacket* (1938) shows a gentleman's suit seated on a chair, with a pipe inserted into the pocket and an object replacing the head (Figure 3.12). Hanawa's *Factory Gentleman* (*Kōjō no shinshi*) applies the same method but, as he would offer the chief theoretical premises of the club's activities, is also accompanied with writing in which he establishes the image as an example of the displacement technique (Figure 3.13).[53]

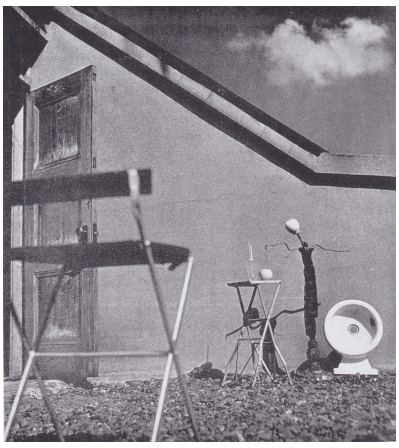

Figure 3.14: Yasui Nakaji, *Hat*, 1936.

Figure 3.15: Tanahashi Shisui, *Feast*, 1938.

The same experiments also substituted the body with natural objects. In Yasui's *Hat* (1936), for example, a figure is suggested by the placement of a straw hat atop a large tree trunk, placed against a staircase (Figure 3.14). Tanahashi Shisui's *Feast* (*Kyōen*) exemplifies the same approach by constructing a body substitute from the pieces of wood placed on a table base and using a ceramic bowl to suggest a head (Figure 3.15). Appearing in the May 1938 issue of the *Kameraman* (*Cameraman*), the *Feast* was produced by the artist closely related to Yasui both in the Tampei and the Naniwa clubs, and is complicated by a chair seen in the foreground and the motif of an open

[53] Hanawa Gingo (1938). Shashinga ni okeru chōgenjitsushugi no hatten [Development of Surrealism in the Photographic Image]. *Foto Taimsu*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 33. See also: Note 60 in Chapter 2. For a reading of Yasui's *Suit Jacket* as possibly a self-portrait see: Kuwahara Kineo (et al.) (1986). *Nihon shashin zenshū 3: Kindai shashin no gunzō* [Complete Collection of Photography in Japan 3: Modern Photography Movement in Japan]. Tokyo: Shōgakkan p. 16.

door.[54] Whereas Yasui still relies on partial use of clothes to suggest an absent body, Tanahashi completely substitutes it with objects. In both instances, in the use of clothing as 'fragmentary shells' as well as in the cases where a figure is suggested by the use of natural objects, the aim remains consistent with the use of mannequin parts, as the body remains essentially invisible.[55]

Such strategic use of invisibility as a method of experimenting with displacement in staged photography is strongly resonant with Paul Nougé's series *Subversion of Images* (*Subversion des images*, 1929-1930), showing a group of sitters interacting with invisible objects. As Silvano Levy has shown, Nougé developed 'a progressive and linear defamiliarisation of the commonplace' in the series by strategically deploying a subversive potential of the notion of absence.[56] Levy's analysis of Nougé's notes accompanying the series shows how he broke down the strategy into four distinct phases, essentially divided into two dialectical facets. Their main characteristic was the use of suppression and substitution whereas, in Nougé's terms, the difference was accomplished in whether the action was performed 'by means of an object' or 'exercised on an object'.[57] In the former case, the effect is achieved by what Levy terms a 'presence of the complement of the missing item' and is experimented among the Osaka photographers in those photographs where mannequin parts or clothing are used to suggest an absented body.[58] Levy describes the latter case by suggesting that 'not only is the object in question now removed from the contextual setting, but it is also replaced by a totally different object'.[59] His interpretation of this situation suggests that it creates a tension between the expected and the presented by

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[54] Although these elements of the image can be read as empty pictorial spaces they equally invite a reading that the 'feast' is laid down for an invisible sitter (or the camera eye) either about to enter or leave the scene through the door. They thus suggest that the 'feast' might symbolise an image, whose consumption leads into a passage to a different type of reality.
[55] For a further discussion about a 'fragmentary shell' and its ability to 'stand for the whole of the body' in Surrealism as its 'shadow and a phantom' see: Powell, Kirsten H. (1997), p. 520.
[56] Levy, Silvano (2007). Paul Nougé Constructing Absence. In: Allmer, Patricia and Van Gelder, Hilde (eds.), *Collective Inventions: Surrealism in Belgium*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p. 71.
[57] Ibid, pp. 76-79.
[58] Ibid, p. 77.
[59] Ibid.

the use of 'perverting objects'.[60] These objects, by means of which the action is achieved, stage the absence by the use of either suppression - deleting of the object in question - or substitution - their replacement with other objects. The chief difference between Nougé's series and the work of Osaka photographers grouped around Yasui is that the 'object' in question (both suppressed and substituted) is the body. The body is not only rendered as a construct but seemingly completely disappears, suggesting suppression and substitution to be the elements of metamorphosis, of the identity of the body and its representation, but ultimately of representation itself.[61] Although it does involve an action 'exercised on an object', the aim is set in relation to the main subject of the process – the production of not only object-bodies but also object-photographs. Regardless of this difference, there is a potential in ascribing the same functional aim in the work of the Osaka clubs at charging such missing object-bodies with a subversive potential achieved in the process in which they assume the powers possessed by their substitutes.[62] The body is thus offered a status of independence not only by fragmentation but also by complete objectification and is ascribed with agency in its potential to intervene into reality as a Surrealist object-image. Whereas in the case of actions performed 'by the means of object' the process remains fairly evident to the viewer, the following step in the procedure further confuses the established points of reference for readings of individual elements in the image. This analysis becomes of a particular relevance when returning to the images discussed at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium and especially Hirai's photograph exhibited for the occasion.

[60] Ibid.
[61] For the notion of 'disappearance' as a strategy of metamorphoses in staged photography see: Stojkovic, Jelena (2013). The City Vanishes: Urban Landscape in Staged Chinese Photography. *History of Photography*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 360-369.
[62] Levy, Silvano (2007), p. 80.

Figure 3.16: Hirai Terushichi, *Blue Sky*, 1938.

Figure 3.17: Yasui Nakaji, *Composition: Gyroscope*, 1938.

Hirai's *Blue Sky* (*Aozora*) received the highest praise at the symposium for its accomplishment by the participating photographers and critics (Figure 3.16).[63] The image shows an assembly of objects in the foreground connected with a wire together with a male figure, seen behind it with his hands in the air.[64] In the accompanying note, Hirai indicates the confusion of referential systems by saying how he is often told that the objects seen in his photographs are difficult to comprehend.[65] However, the placement of a pole in the bottom right corner discloses the image as embedded in the practice of collective photo shoots. The same pole is also seen in its mirror position in Yasui's *Composition: Gyroscope* (1938), another arrangement of objects placed beneath a shadow of the moon (Figure 3.17).

[63] For Imai's comment how it was the best image in the show and for Takiguchi's opinion how it revealed a clear interest in (the Surrealist) object see: Zen'ei shashin zadankai [Avant-Garde Photography Symposium] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 9, p. 23.
[64] Another figure seen walking in the background might not be a deliberate part of the image.
[65] Zen'ei shashin zadankai (1938), p. 10.

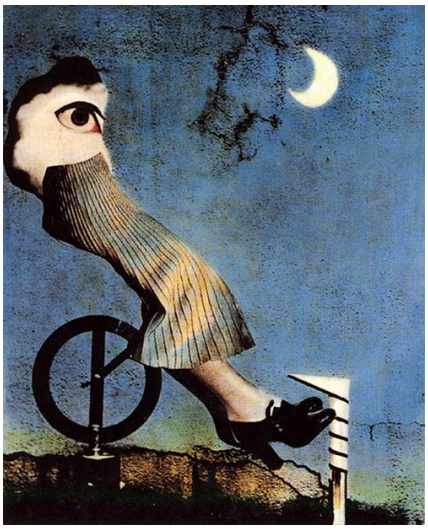

Figure 3.18: Yasui Nakaji, *Untitled*, date unknown.

Figure 3.19: Hirai Terushichi, *Fantasy of the Moon*, 1938.

The gyroscope from the title of this photograph appears in another untitled image by Yasui, a composition of objects arranged on a terrace behind a door (Figure 3.18). Here, we see the gyroscope placed on a wall alongside a smaller stand with a rectangular frame, whereas another two objects designed to hold laboratory equipment are placed in the foreground. Although untitled, the image establishes how the source of the gyroscope was the study room of the Osaka primary school. Whereas the substitution of the body with mannequin parts and clothes renders the process of defamiliarisation as fairly evident, ambiguity of the objects from the science study room complicates it as less apparent. However, the final confirmation of how *Blue Sky* and *Gyroscope* extend the same practice of using 'perverting objects' to substitute a body can be established in a photo-collage produced by Hirai in the same year and titled *Fantasy of the Moon* (Figure 3.19). In this collage, all the elements from the *Gyroscope*, including the gyroscope, the pole and the shadow of the moon, are complemented with a collage of a female figure, indicating how Yasui's object study is another rendition of a bodily substitution. Therefore, both *Blue Sky* and *Gyroscope* become apparent arrangements of objects aimed to portray a fictional narration and a romantic encounter.

The use of objects 'paradoxically infused with receptive sensibility' as 'stand-ins' for an actual body had been a poetic strategy developed not only in the writing by Breton but also by Robert Desnos and Paul Éluard.[66] The strategy of Osaka photographers thus actualises the poetic imagination into the realm of visual representation by staging situations that can achieve it in reality. Such activity is assigned another layer of agency by the function of the Surrealist object, assumed not only by the body represented through suppression and substitution but also by the image that shows it. Such a status of the image in the practice of displacing, substituting and perverting objects among Osaka based photographers is established inter-textually, in reference to each other's images. Hirai's *Blue Sky* is indeed difficult to read against established systems of signification in reality but assumes its meaning by a deciphering of pictorial clues contained in his extended practice and in reference to the works produced by other associated photographers, such as Yasui.

In other words, these images assume a status independent of language in their mediation of meaning, and this position is further stressed in the means by which they would be circulated in the press. Following the exhibitions in Osaka and Tokyo, the photographs would also appear in photographic magazines and a mass media context, while in the latter case their meaning would often be divorced from any grounding in text. The most extreme example of this situation can be observed in the July 1938 volume of the *Home Life*, a special issue dedicated to the Tampei club that featured Hirai's *Altar* and Kametarō's *Hand* together with contributions by the other members of the club: Yukawa Yasuhide, Ōsawa Oshio, Shiihara Osamu, Kakimoto Kiichi, and Yasui. In the volume, the photographs were placed among gravure sections and articles focusing on popular subject matter, ranging from the 'Ancient Method of Manufacturing Special Steel for Japanese Swords as Carried out in Izumo Province' to the 'Up-to-Date Equipment in Maternity

[66] For Breton's comparison of an automatist's body with a recording instrument, Desnos's comparison of a body to a bottle and Éluard's analogy between a body and a house see: Conley, Katharine (2011). Surrealism's Ghostly Automatic Body. *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 299.

Hospitals'.[67] The photographs were inserted within the magazine in pairs and in four different sections, and were published on full pages with titles and artists' names. All the works published were exemplary of the experiments with the Surrealist object strategy undertaken at the time.[68] The magazine itself thus became another space of exhibition for the photographs of the club, presented as exclusive and valuable. They would have been assigned a distinguished and central place so as to promote the magazine as 'modern', published with a title and a table of contents in English towards the same end. Divorced from both the Surrealist and 'avant-garde' contexts, they became operative on the level of 'wild images' in the public domain.[69] Such media access followed a great stir caused in the press by the 27th *Namiten*, an annual exhibition of the Naniwa club that took place at the same location in Tokyo to that of the Tampei club in June 1938, with accompanying shows organised in Osaka and Kyoto.[70] The media response varied, and criticism ranged from a complete dismissal of any innovation or excitement to a strong appraisal of the Kansai photographers for their daring and striking practice.[71] Given the popularity of the photographs and the number of magazines that circulated them throughout the year, 1938 is considered as the peak of the Osaka-based photographic radicalism.[72] Under such conditions, the

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[67] *Home Life* (ed.) (1938). Table of Contents. Vol. IV, No. 7, unpaginated.
[68] Yasui Nakaji (et al.) (2004), p. 83.
[69] For the use of the term 'wild images' in reference to amateur photography see Seijdel, Jorinde (2005). Wild Images: The Rise of Amateur Images in the Public Domain. *Open 8* [Online]. Available to access: http://classic.skor.nl/article-2859-en.html [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[70] For how three additional museum exhibitions were organised in May and June in Osaka and Kyoto alongside the annual exhibitions of the two clubs in Tokyo in June and how Yasui attended those rather than the Tokyo show see: Nakajima Norihiro (2004). Shashin no 'radikarusa' ['Radicalism' in Photography]. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha, pp. 240-243.
[71] Ibid, p. 240.
[72] For how photographs from the club's exhibition were reprinted in the *Asahi Kamera*, *Foto Taimusu*, *Shashin Saron* and *Shashin Geppō* see: *Naniwa Shashin Kurabu Kaihō* [Bulletin of the Naniwa Photography Club] (1938), Vol. 1-7, pp. 6-7. For how Sakata's *Crisis w*as seen in the symposiums as a part of the Naniwa club's exhibition see: Ibid. For a separate discussion on the exhibition of the Tampei club among the members of the Tokyo club (Nagata, Abe, Takiguchi) in the same volume that published the report on the symposium see: Tampei shashin ten wo miru [Looking at the Tampei Exhibition] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 9, pp. 1-5. For a report on the Naniwa Photo Club symposium organised during the exhibition see the following Chapter 4. For the fact that the practice of staged photography in the two clubs was so well recognised in the press of the day that it was a subject of mockery see: Fuyuki Kennosuke (1939). Doko ga, dōshite, waruino ka [Where, Why, How Good Is It]. *Kamera Kurabu*, Vol. 4, No. 8, unpaginated. For examples of a related practice developing in

photographs seen in the *Home Life* would very possibly be recognisable to certain audiences outside of any direct reference to their origin.

As their main function was previously established to be a form of exploring intervention into reality by application of the Surrealist object strategy, the situation affirms their main aspiration to produce a 'new' vision, which is also achieved in their relations to each other, regardless of a process of deterritorialisation from a directly Surrealist or even an 'avant-garde' context into the domain of mass media. In this aim, 'regularity' becomes of equal importance to 'originality' of expression.[73] Thus focusing on the same objects by different photographers at collective shooting sessions can be seen as facilitating the process, with repetition of pictorial elements providing the means of recognition and credibility. What ultimately counts is the newness of the entire regime produced, based on both 'originality' and 'regularity' of the photographs that constitute it. According to Claire Bishop, this can be understood as a creation of an active subject through the exploration of a shared authorship and the restoration of a social bond through a collective elaboration of meaning.[74] Bishop has pointed out how the political agency of an artwork has been assigned according to the position that it occupies within the production relations of its time by Walter Benjamin, and has indicated how although by today's standards this model of spectatorship could be considered passive, it primarily relies on raising consciousness through the

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Fukuoka, and especially in photographs by Takahashi Wataru and Hisano Hisashi see: *Kameraman* (1938). June Edition, unpaginated. See also: *Kamera Āto* (1938). May Edition, unpaginated. See also: *Kamera Āto* (1938). December Edition, unpaginated. See also: Hisano Hisashi (1939). Niyari to shite utsusu [Taking Pictures with a Grin]. *Kamera Āto*, February Edition, pp. 2-5. For how the practice would be developed at the time by individual photographers not explicitly related to Surrealism and especially Ueda Shōji see: *Kamera Āto* (1938). Novemeber Edition, unpaginated.

[73] For an equal importance assigned to 'originality' as to 'regularity' for production of a discourse in relation to Michel Foucault's understanding of the term 'statement' (*énoncé*) see: Deleuze, Gilles and Parnet, Claire ([1977] 1987). *Dialogues*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 7. For how there are two types of statements operating within a discourse: 'highly valued and relatively rare, which have no similar antecedents, which may serves as models for others' and those 'ordinary, everyday' which 'derive, sometimes going so far as to repeat it word for ford, from what has already been said' see: Foucault, Michel ([1969] 2010). *Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, p. 157.

[74] Bishop, Claire (2006). Introduction: Viewers and Producers. In: Bishop, Claire (ed.), *Participation*. London: Whitechapel, p. 12.

distance of *critical thinking*.[75] However, the proposition of such critical thinking on the side of the viewership in Japan during the 1930s could result in prosecution, as the wide framework of the Peace Maintenance Law could presume any form of activity as potentially suspicious.[76] In this regard, Tezuka Miwako writes:

> Unlike in the case of wartime Germany, vanguard art was judged as being degenerate by the Japanese authority not on the basis of aesthetic standards. It was, rather, singularly condemned due to its suspected link with extraneous political ideals and ideologies, particularly Marxism, which were increasingly subjected to prosecution for they infused the minds of the people with free will and critical thinking.[77]

From this perspective, even the report of the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium, as it showed the photographs discussed on eleven consecutive pages, with each around two thirds of a page in size, could be reassessed in terms of its main function. Whereas the participating photographers and critics would dismiss their political interests in the discussion , the main motivation would be to show photographs in the public domain, presupposing participation from a critically aware spectatorship. Such compromising of the content for the sake of the valuable media access would take place at the time when the viewership would already be required to read 'Surrealism' between the lines of 'avant-garde'. Under such terms, these images would achieve their effect of 'bewildering sensation', overthrowing accepted notions

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[75] Ibid, p.11. For Benjamin's text in question 'The Author as Producer', in which he claims how 'this apparatus is better, the more consumers it is able to turn into producers - that is, the more readers or spectators into collaborators', see: Benjamin, Walter ([1934] 2003). *Selected Writings Vol. 2 Part 2: 1931-1934*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 777.

[76] For how 'so vague was the wording of the legislation that in reality any activity might be considered grounds for arrest, certainly including the activities of artists, intellectuals, and dissenters' see: Eckersall, Peter (2006). From Liminality to Ideology: The Politics of Embodiment in Prewar Avant-Garde Theatre in Japan. In: Harding, James and Rouse, John (eds.), *Not the Other Avant-Garde*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 231.

[77] Tezuka, Miwako (2005). *Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop): Avant-Garde Experiments in Japanese Art of the 1950s*. PhD thesis, Columbia University, pp. 122-123.

of reality and aiming at what Ferdinand Alquié has termed as a 'collapse of the given'.[78]

Perverse vision

Figure 3.20: Hanawa Gingo, *Light and Dark Flower*, 1938.

Figure 3.21: Hanawa Gingo, *Hands and Eyes*, 1938.

Hanawa's photograph shown at the symposium is titled *Light and Dark Flower* (*Meian kaika*) (Figure 3.20). The image shows a female model behind a large pipe with her right hand in the air, positioned in a symmetrical composition so as to suggest the 'flower' from the title to be represented by the model's hand gesture. Hanawa articulates the image in a statement that there is nothing he wishes to say, insisting how it is neither an avant-garde nor a Surrealist photograph.[79] As such, it initiated a strong response at the meeting as to the members of the Tokyo club the wording of the accompanying text refused any

[78] For the origin of Alquié's phrase in *Philosophy of Surrealism* (1969) see: Finkelstein, Haim (1969). *Surrealism and the Crisis of the Object.* Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, p.1.
[79] Zen'ei shashin zadankai (1938), p. 9. Each photograph exhibited was accompanied by a caption and a short explanation provided by the artist, except for Yasui who did not attend the meeting.

relevance or engagement.[80] Basing their criticism on the allusiveness of the image's commentary, the Tokyo club thus completely failed to read it against the collective activities of the Avant-Garde Image Group from which it resulted. At least in the first instance, the photograph does not show any relation to the experiments with the Surrealist objects carried out in the collective shooting sessions and is more resonant with a photograph titled *Hands and Eyes* (*Te to me*), published in the previous 'Avant-Garde Style in Photography' in May 1938 (Figure 3.21).[81] In this text, Hanawa explained the *Hands and Eyes* to be a reference to Amagi Jun's image published in the same volume, and attested to how it was previously seen in the *Asahi Nenkan* (*Asahi Annual*) under a title *Passionate Landscape* (*Jōyokuteki-na fūkei*). He discussed the image as an example of how even those photographs showing people can be understood in a more complex manner and how, although it was embarrassing for him to reveal his intention in the title, he found the application of varied approaches necessary to the practice.[82] Both photographs thus establish Hanawa's interest in staging situations for the camera also in the form of performances, using live models. In reference to Amagi's image he establishes the meaning of the *Hands and Eyes* to be performed in an inter-textual relationship outside of language whereas an 'embarrassing' disclosure of his application of the 'double image' in its previous title reveals how grounding of the photograph's meaning in the caption would not be a common practice for Hanawa.

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[80] Ibid, pp. 21-22. For this discussion, in which Hanawa would reply to the criticism by saying 'if you climb a mountain you climb a mountain, you don't climb a mountain so that you can go to the sea' see: Ibid, p. 22.
[81] Hanawa Gingo (1938 [5]). Shashinga ni okeru zen'ei teki sakufū, Osaka no aru shashin kurabu reikai ni te hanasu [Avant-Garde Style in Photography, Discussion from a Monthly Meeting of an Osaka Photo Club]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol 15, No. 5, p. 26.
[82] Ibid, p. 29.

Figure 3.22: Hanawa Gingo, 'Dream of Spring in (Photographic) Print', *Kamera Kurabu*, July 1938, detail.

Two months before 'New Developments', Hanawa published another article entitled 'Dream of Spring in (Photographic) Print' in the July issue of the *Kamera Kurabu*, accompanied with a series of photographs exploring the potential of performance in staged photography.[83] This series reveals Hanawa's *Light and Dark Flower* to have originated at the same mannequin factory shoot, as well as an interest in composing a narration by a sequence of photographs. The series shows a female model interacting within the surrounding so as to achieve the effect of displacement. In its opening part, we see the model propped against a large stone, with the head placed on top of it and hands figuring at its front (Figure 3.22). The series continues with an image of the model descending down the hill with her hands in the air, and with another two showing her against a ruin of a stone building. In these, the model is seen laid down on a wall with her head upside down and with a pair

[83] Hanawa Gingo (1938 [3]). Shinshō no haru no yume [Dream of Spring in (Photographic) Print]. *Kamera Kurabu*, Vol. 3, No. 7, pp. 42-44.

of shoes substituting her head, again with a distinct hand gesture.

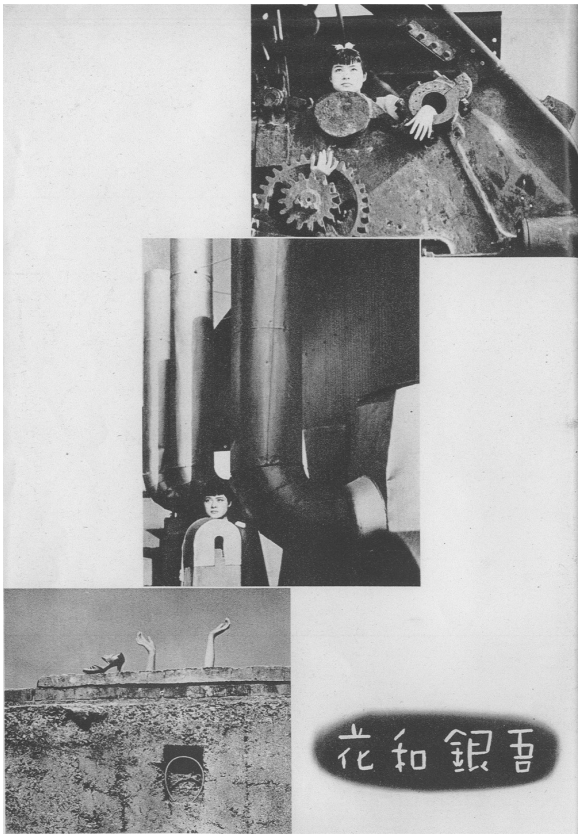

Figure 3.23: Hanawa Gingo, 'Dream of Spring in (Photographic) Print', *Kamera Kurabu*, July 1938, detail.

There is a sense of movement achieved in the first four images appearing to show the model descending down the hill from the first image onwards. Such an impression is seemingly disrupted in the following page where the first two photographs show the same model in a different, industrial setting, with her body displaced against a metal construction at the site (Figure 3.23). However, the connection is retained by foregrounding the hands as the site of displacement. The series is made complete with the final image, identical to the one closing the first two pages but shot from a different angle, and with the artist's signature at the end. Hanawa uses three different sites in the series to suggest a combination of natural, urban and industrial landscapes: Hōraikyō hill near Takarazuka, Miyakojima island in Osaka and *Shimadzu* mannequin factory near Kyoto.[84] It is the second part of the series that reveals

[84] Hanawa Gingo (1938 [3]), p. 43.

a larger body of work behind the *Light and Dark Flower*, as it shows the same model in the same setting of the Kyoto mannequin factory, with the large pipes and displacement of the model's hands against factory bolts also resembling Ueda's *Delighted*.

The accompanying text is a poetic elaboration of Hanawa's intent in the series and uses a number of metaphoric illustrations to create an atmosphere for the images to be contextualised in. The opening paragraph reads:

> Casually looking aside on a train station, one notices a red post box and thinks: 'Oh, I don't recall such a thing ever being here'. But looking back while getting on the approaching train one realises there is nothing there. How strange…aren't there other people who had the same experience? Be it fatigue of an anxious life or a deed of a dodgy mischief, for our recent generation (*saikinjin no warewareni*) this is not a frightening but rather an amusing strangeness. To name it, one can say 'I am a happy vision pervert'.[85]

The paragraph, evoking the occurrence of 'surreality' in the experience of urban everyday, continued into a portrayal of a similar feeling arising from an encounter with a beautiful passenger on a train, with the result that all memory of other people was deleted. Again, Hanawa referred to such an encounter as 'happy strangeness'.[86] Finally, he established how the 'bright present' of the (photographic) print made an easier world to inhabit for ghosts, captured nowadays in bright daylight, whereas in the old Japan they would only go out in damp autumn nights.[87] The 'spring' in the title thus refers to the ability of photography to capture 'surreality', which would have been limited to the oral world of the night in the past, and thus ascribes primacy of an image over text. The title, Hanawa explained, took its cue from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1590-1596) to refer to the part of the narrative unravelling around the fairy king Oberon and his queen Titania, but he encouraged the reader to create one's own fictional or poetic

[85] Ibid, p. 42.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid, p.43.

script that would connect the photographs.[88] The feature embodies Hanawa's previously elaborated understanding of how 'surreality' is contained in reality and presented to the camera for capture in everyday life, but also suggests the existence of a 'perverse vision', a type of reconfiguring the everyday under the rule of pure intuition, as indicated previously in his reference to Sakata's definition of Surrealism. At the end of the text, he stressed how such works can by no means be considered 'bad', thus evoking Breton's view expressed in the Prague address, similarly indicating how 'the world of shadows' created in art and poetry cannot be seen as divorced from agency, indicating the application of the Surrealist object strategy'.[89] The 'new' or 'perverse' vision offered by Hanawa in the series thus aims to produce an active effect in interaction with the viewer by means of bringing to the light of day a ghostly apparition of the imagination embodied by the model. For the achievement of this effect, however, Hanawa also relies on an inter-textual relationship with photographs produced by the co-members of his club.

Figure 3.24: Tanahashi Shisui, *Living*, 1938.

[88] For example, Hanawa suggests 'a night guard on his routine inspection gets surprised to find a young girl's head stuck in the factory's chimney', as per: Ibid.
[89] For how 'art and poetry deliberately create a world of shadows, of phantoms, of fictitious likeness, and yet for all that they cannot be accused of being powerless and unable to produce anything but empty forms of reality' see: Breton, André ([1935] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 256.

In the series, the relationship is visible in the use of the factory site in Kyoto but is also indicated by a distinct hand gesture of the model. The same hand gesture was featured in Tanahashi's photograph *Living* (*Ikiteru*), published in the same issue of the *Kameraman* as the *Feast* (Figure 3.24). This image shows another view of a female model in the field with hands rising against the grass, and can be considered as echoing a group of similar images produced as a result of the mannequin factory shoot by Kametarō, Ueda and Hanawa, all using a similar hand gesture to suggest an erotic encounter. At the symposium, however, such a reading of the *Light and Dark Flower* fails to register in the discussion.

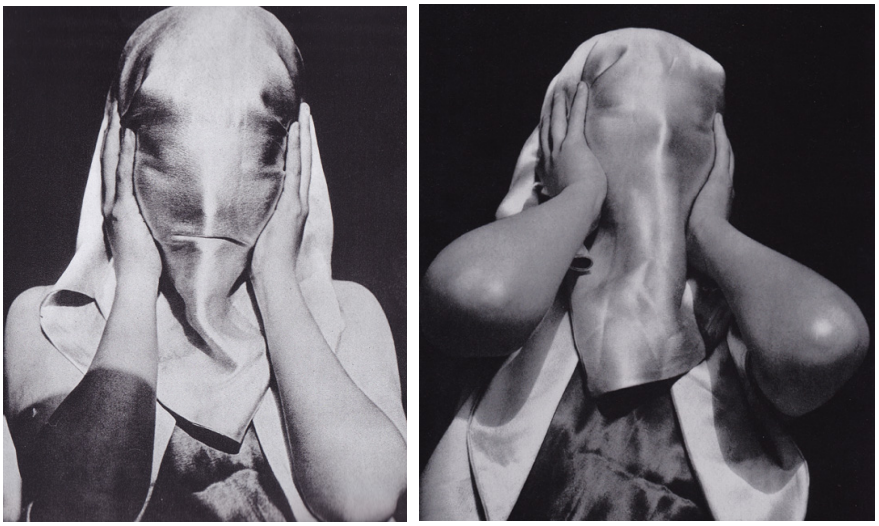

Figure 3.25: Hirai Terushichi, *Recollection*, 1939.

Figure 3.26: Tamotsu Terada, *Woman (C)*, 1940.

The use of performances in staged photography among Osaka photographers, as seen at the symposium in the examples of Hirai's *Blue Sky* and Hanawa's *Light and Dark Flower*, thus applies the same system of inter-referentiality as seen in the arrangements of objects aimed at substitution of the body. For instance, Hirai's photograph published in the October 1939 issue of the *Kamera Kurabu* as *Recollection* (*Tsuisō*) is another example of collaboration and intertwining of different photographic practices belonging to the same photo-club. It shows a female model holding a cloth covering her face (Figure 3.25). When seen against an image included in the *Light* and entitled *Woman (C)* by Tamotsu Terada, however, it becomes clear that the

same subject matter - the same model holding the same cloth over her face - was photographed by both artists (Figure 3.26).

Figure 3.27: Tamotsu Terada, *Woman (A)*, 1940.

Figure 3.28: Tamotsu Terada, *Woman (B)*, 1940.

In the *Light*, Tamotsu is featured with another two images, both showing a female model having her face covered. In *Woman (A)* a long cloth covers not only the head but also most of the body of a figure standing by an open door (Figure 3.27). In *Woman (B)* the head is obliterated with a more elaborate construction of objects, whereas displacement of the figure is also achieved in juxtaposition of the evening dress with the surrounding of a ruined house (Figure 3.28). The dress and the assembly of objects obliterating the face evoke Dalí's performance titled *Phantom of Sex Appeal* organised in Trafalgar Square during the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London (1936) in collaboration with Sheila Legge. In this performance, Legge appeared as a 'phantom', dressed in a long white satin dress and black gloves with the face obscured by paper roses and ladybirds and a photograph of the event was

published on the cover of the *International Surrealist Bulletin* (No. 4, in September 1936).[90]

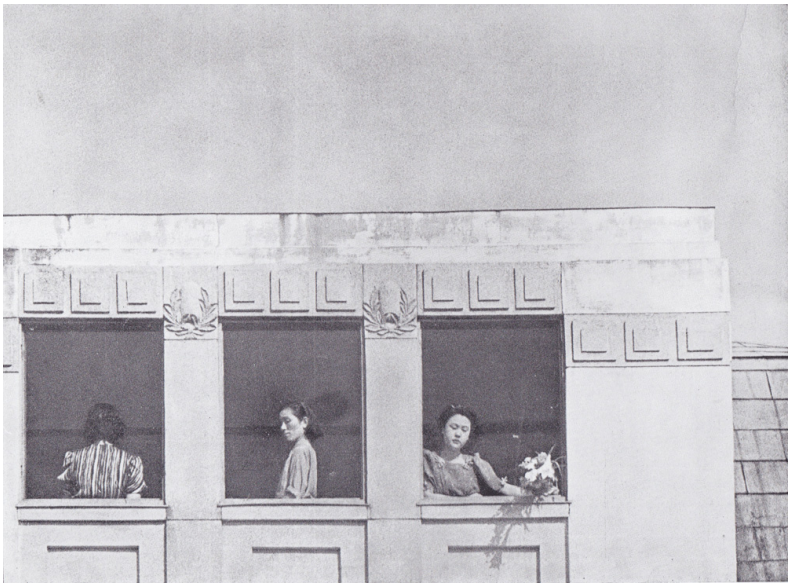

Figure 3.29: Yasui Nakaji, *Work*, 1939.

This performance was a part of Dalí's effort to explore the potential of theatricality in situations staged for the camera aimed to blur the lines between art and life.[91] Among Osaka photographers, such an approach to staged photography would not only be grounded in references to foreign Surrealist works but would also base itself on Yasui's formulation of the 'semi-still life'. Yasui's interest in theatricality as a format for delivering the method is attested in his *Work* (*Sakuhin*), in which he stages the photograph with three female models, seen in a movement continuing in three consecutive windows of a building (Figure 3.29).

Such use of theatricality would affirm how production of the photographs in situations staged for the camera was not simply interested in breaking away from representation of the body but in using the body as the means of undoing representation. Michel Poivert describes staged photographs by Surrealists such as Antonin Artaud, Nougé and Man Ray as a 'wax museum

[90] Weisberger, Edward (1999). *Surrealism, Two Private Eyes: the Nesuhi Ertegun and Daniel Filipacchi Collections* (Exh. Cat.). New York, N.Y.: Guggenheim Museum, p. 736.
[91] Kachur, Lewis (2001), p. 88.

constructed by Surrealism to dispose of relics of representation'.[92] To Poivert, they form a rupture in descriptive narration, an irreconcilable assemblage of 'true' and 'false' in the domain of the image.[93] Introducing an aesthetic of falseness, theatrical photography renders representation as grotesque and absurd.[94] However, a reversal of photography's claim of veracity on the part of Osaka photographers would be achieved not only in the practice of displacement, as suggested by Breton, but by exploration of a 'double image' strategy, as developed by Dalí. The importance of this notion for the Osaka clubs is implicated in the substitution of objects as well as in the importance assigned to object-photographs. However, it also arrives through an idea that a 'straight', documentary photograph can be subverted in a process of projecting individual desire.

Intervention in reality

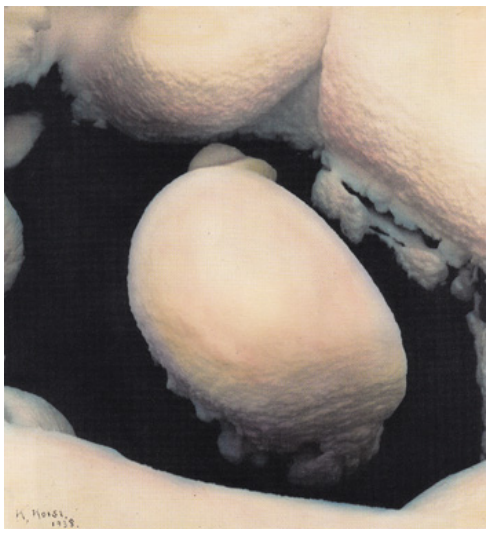

Figure 3.30: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Untitled*, 1938.

Figure 3.31: Koishi Kiyoshi, *Hibernation*, 1938.

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[92] Poivert, Michel (2009). Les images du dehors. In: Bajac, Quentin (et al.), *La Subversion des Images*, *Surréalisme, Photographie, Film* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, p. 65.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid, p. 66.

In ‘Avant-Garde Style in Photography’, a report from a monthly club meeting in Osaka, Hanawa commented on a photograph by Yamamoto Kansuke, a seemingly plain landscape showing a riverside in winter and explained its effect in the ability to convey an erotic portrayal of female curves in the application of the Surrealist object, resonant of Dalí’s ‘double image’ (Figure 3.30).[95] He explained how the Surrealist object worked in photography by shooting ‘scattered stones and tree stumps’ in order to ‘re-recognise’ (*sai ninshiki*) what is called ‘nature’ by investment of the photographer’s fantasy.[96] Hanawa thus affirms his own interest into merging performances with landscape. However, his comment is also of significance as it reveals *Hibernation* (*Tōmin*), a photograph submitted to the symposium by Koishi, as a manifestation of the same approach (Figure 3.31). In the discussion of the image at the meeting, however, the focus was placed on its use of colour. Replying to Takiguchi who said how the colour should best stay true to the original scene, Koishi insisted how, on the contrary, he found it potent exactly for the possibility it offered for further manipulation of the photograph and for revealing its constructed nature.[97]

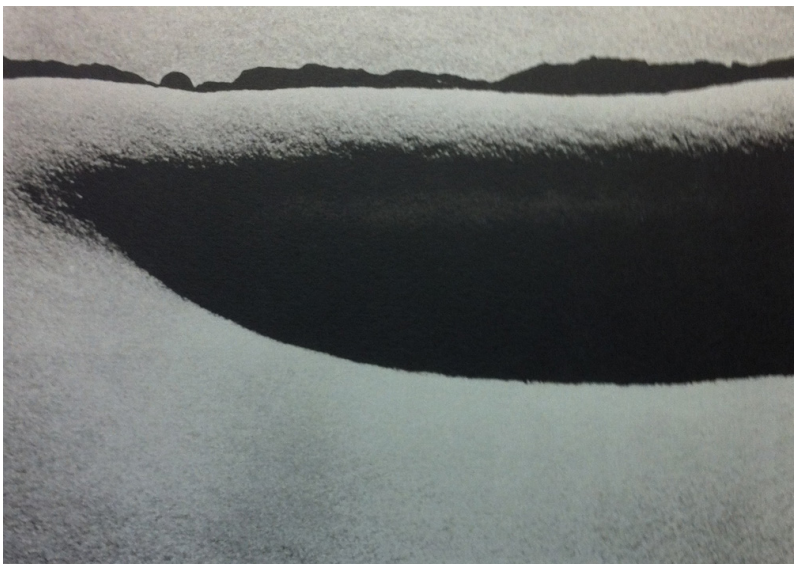

Figure 3.32: Yasui Nakaji, *Snow*, 1941.

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[95] Hanawa Gingo (1938 [5]), p. 28.
[96] Ibid. For how this reference can also be understood as indicating Yasui’s practice as his ‘semi-still life’ was firstly defined against such shots of natural objects see: Mitsuda Yuri (2004), p. 14.
[97] Zen’ei shashin zadankai (1938), pp. 22-23.

Yasui would suggest the same reversal of a straight shot resonant with the 'double image' in describing his intention behind another view of a snow landscape, included in his last show *Snow, Moon, Flower* in 1941 (Figure 3.32). He says: 'Nonsense from a dilettante, you may think, but these images are not about those things themselves'.[98] Such a description of his final series of work brings the application of the 'semi-still life' method to a full circle, as Yasui also described it as a 'montage *in situ*' and insisted how it can equally be achieved within a landscape.[99] In the first phase, it involved displacing varied objects in experiments with the Surrealist object strategy. It was further explored by staging more elaborate situations so as to substitute the body with objects. However, later in the decade the method motivated exploration of a straight shot so as to invest the external reality with the internal fantasy, as suggested in the full scale performances staged for the camera by Hanawa and Hirai and culminating in the subversion of the landscape by the possibility that it might also be read as a 'double image'. In this process, the body was seemingly rendered invisible, suppressed and substituted by objects, only to be reclaimed via staged performances and finally metamorphosed into a landscape view. However, it is not only the body, or a subject of a photograph that metamorphoses in this process, but also the photograph showing it. Released against a power of rupture, it becomes a critical tool and an objectification of thought.[100] The objectification of thought implies blurring of interiority and exteriority, as an aporetic condition of the first conditions the other, similarly to a Surrealist inversed mirror.[101] The inversion of exteriority and interiority, very much a part of a Surrealist intention to subject reality to subversion by deliberate production of objects, is achieved in Yasui's method through objectification of the body and subjectivisation of the landscape.

In the specific time-space of 1930s Japan, this process needs to be read against the notion of the 'national body'. A critique of the nation's collectivisation as the prevailing focus of the state politics after 1937 is easily

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[98] Yasui Nakaji (et al.) (2004), p. 147.
[99] For how 'montage *in situ*' was referred to in Japanese as *genchi no montāju* or 'montage on site' see: Mitsuda Yuri (2004), p. 15.
[100] Poivert, Michel (2009), p. 69.
[101] Ibid, p. 70.

identified in the insistence on a fragmented, constructed, and individual status of the body. In Hanawa's 'Avant-Garde Style in Photography', the critique becomes operative immediately in the space of the same magazine volume. Namely, it also included images of nationalist propaganda in a feature introducing Leni Riefenstahl's *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf* (1937), a photobook recording the process of Riefenstahl's filming of *Olympia*, a documentary record of the Olympic games in Berlin in 1936.

Figure 3.33: '*Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf*, Festival of World's Youth! Epic Poetry of the Olympic Games Organised by Germany', *Foto Taimusu*, May 1938, detail.

In the feature, titled in Japanese as 'Festival of World's Youth! Epic Poetry of the Olympic Games Organised by Germany', a significant proportion of the introductory pages is assigned to a photograph of Adolf Hitler, with a caption that reads 'Fuehrer Hitler' (*Hittorā sōtō*) (Figure 3.33).[102] This time, it was not the amiable character of Hitler's personality that was being promoted, as in the previous issue of the magazine, but an institution of healthy and sportive life. Following Japanese dissatisfaction with the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928, in which the Japanese body was seen as insufficiently competitive against its Western counterparts, preparations for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1940

[102] *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf*, Sekai no wakamono no shukusai! Doitsu ga tsukutta orimupikku jojishi [*Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf*, Festival of World's Youth! Epic Poetry of the Olympic Games Organised by Germany] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 20-25.

(not abandoned before July 1938) celebrated the idealised body as a form of the national ideological discourse.[103] In the feature, the body is not separated from a political context, or its mediation through images, as the introductory pages assign an equal space to the photographs of Hitler, athletes of the German team and Riefenstahl, shown working on the editing of the film. The Nazi salute seen in the photographs of Hitler and the German team, however, can be contrasted with a distinct hand gesture in Hanawa's *Hands and Eyes*, as 'Avant-Garde Style in Photography' followed 'Festival of World's Youth!' in the same magazine volume. A symbol identifying collaborative construction of pictorial meaning among Osaka photographers, the hand gesture can be regarded as subverting the salute by appropriating and reversing it in a humorous manner.

However, it was not only representation of the body that was mobilised in construction of a collective basis of the 'national body' but also the landscape against which such collectivisation would be accomplished. Understood as an external object to the modern view of the self, a romanticised rural landscape was equally utilised in synthesis of the collective spirit. In the intellectual climate of the decade that was frustrated by the impartiality of the Japanese modernism, which increasingly became synonymous with the Western hegemony, the state claimed a cultural essence by grounding it in a specific place.[104] Furthermore, the state program demanded collectivisation of the state into a single entity based on a 'pre-modern' irrationality for achieving transcendence of subjectivity in an image of a beatified rural landscape as a site where it could be aesthetically achieved.[105] This was a consequence of the complete oppression of the Communist thought during the period of 'cultural renaissance' (1932-1937) that allowed the 'humanisation of philosophy' and emergence of the Japan Romantic School (*Nihon Rōman-ha*) to lay effective grounds for militarist ideology.[106] As Iida Yumiko has stressed,

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[103] Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo (2008). *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 13.
[104] Iida, Yumiko (2002), p. 65.
[105] Ibid, p. 59.
[106] For how 'in the domain of knowledge, romantic trends reached their apogee, in the period immediately following the state's suppression of the urban and rural Leftist movements in the mid 1930s, with the sophisticated intellectual production of Watsuji Tetsurō's aesthetic

such a troubled state of contemporary intellectual discourse 'indulged in the circulation of imagistic signs de-linked from concrete objects', as the field of aesthetics was claimed as the main site for the politics of identity.[107]

One of the important premises of the nascent war ideology was that the dichotomy of modern subjectivity was to be transcended in a synthesis between the rational, individual subject and the notion of spatiality as the embodiment of human collectivity.[108] However, whereas the synthesis privileged the latter at the expense of the autonomy of the subject, the first stage of Yasui's 'harmonising' method, achieved in individualisation of the body, presumes an independent subject.[109] Subjectification of the space was thus its logical counterpart, with the notion of 'human collectivity' already abolished by maintaining and insisting on the autonomy of the subject. However, when the second phase of the project is seen without the knowledge of the first, as in Yasui's *Snow*, the line of differentiation from the process of subjectification of the space performed as a part of the nationalist ideology becomes significantly thin.[110] In other words, the Surrealist reversal of interiority and exteriority would offer a means to reclaim subjective forms of occupation, achieved partially through actualisation of erotic desire in the 'mannequin art', but would rely on the same premise of stepping out of and criticising the rational mind as to that of the Japanese romantics.

As a process that 'harmonises the inharmonious' or an attempt at bringing together the division between the internal and the external realities, Yasui's method is rendered straightforward when it subscribes to staged photography

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account of Japanese socio-cultural foundations, Nishida Kitarō and his Kyoto school's notion of Japan's world historical project, and Yasuda Yōjūro and his Japan Romantic School's anti-modern aestheticism lauding the lost beauty of Japan. These socio-economic, intellectual and cultural conditions, which had developed within and in reaction to the deepening process of modernity, together prepared Japan for its descent down the ideological path towards the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, 'total war' and 'overcoming modernity', the ideological complex recounting Japan's world-historical mission to liberate Asia from Western domination' see: Ibid, p. 23.

[107] Ibid, p. 30.

[108] Ibid, p. 37.

[109] Ibid.

[110] For further discussion of this situation with regard to the straight shot see Chapter 7. A significantly late dating of the series (in 1941) should also be noted.

as a gesture that 'knows itself to be appearance'.[111] Diverging from representation 'of' something, an image becomes a demonstration of the mechanisms of illusion.[112] However, when progressing to subversion of reality within the domain of a straight shot, in a method that reclaims representation as a site of personal desire, the situation becomes more complex as it overlaps and reclaims the same space simultaneously constructed as a site of mythologised, nationalist collectivity. Furthermore, it is not only that the same notions of the self (body) and the place (landscape) would be simultaneously claimed by different schools of thought, but it would be in the domain of the image where political struggle would manifest itself, outside of language. That Dalí's methodology, offering agency to an image, was therefore embraced by Japanese Surrealist photographers comes as no surprise, and his paranoia criticism would thus reverberate especially in the Nagoya club.[113] Finally, an attempt to transcend the division between interiority and exteriority in the domain of a straight shot positions Osaka photographers as critical of the war machinery, both in terms of the collectivisation of its forces through mobilisation of the 'national body', but also against the irrational grounds on which such mobilisation would be executed in the field of aesthetics.

Surrealism's aim to liberate the mind by the means of transgressing divisions, against the romanticised Japanese identity claimed on the basis of pre-modern irrationalism, is thus achieved through maintaining a position still embedded within the processes of modernity. However, this position of Osaka photographers cannot be established based solely on the activities of their clubs. Another important dimension behind the notion of the 'national body' was its distinct temporality, as the concept was 'essentialising 'the nation' as

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[111] Henry, Karen (2006). The Artful Disposition: Theatricality, Cinema and the Social Context in Contemporary Photography. In: Pauli, Lori (ed.), *Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre*. London: Merrel, p. 136.
[112] Poivert, Michel (2009), p. 69.
[113] The fact that Hanawa is establishing the practice of reclaiming a straight shot of a landscape through individual desire with an example of Nagoya-based Yamamoto should not be disregarded as unimportant, as photographers in Nagoya would go the longest way in pursuing this tension opened in the domain of documentary photography. For further discussion of this issue see Chapters 5 and 7. Hanawa's comment regarding 're-recognition' of nature can also be read against Naturalism (*Shizen-shugi*), precursor of the romantics in the previous decade that sought equal means of transcending the modernist dualism by idealising nature.

equivalent to ‘the people’ as an alternative temporality and communal space outside modern progressive history’.[114] What emerges as a definitive achievement of Osaka photographers grouped around Yasui, as discussed in this chapter, is the opening up of the field of representation to spatial discontinuity, allowing the enfolding of the subjective and objective, interior and exterior and private and public in the field of photography. With regard to the specific temporal characterisation of the ‘national body’, Yasui’s description of the ‘semi-still life’ method as a ‘montage’ also indicates not only spatial but temporal rupture of narrativity and linearity of representation. This intention is also indicated by his use of an expression ‘out of joint’, pointing at what Poivert has termed as ‘collapsing continuity of reality’.[115] However, reclaiming the historical positioning of the subject in the struggle to remain critical not only of the reasoning mind but a romantic and decadent use of irrationality taking place at the same time, cannot be established in the examination of images discussed at the Avant-Garde Photography symposium only within the Osaka clubs but requires further analysis, as it is overcomes this seeming impasse within a constellation of associated practices of its minor history and in relation to the related temporal basis of the ‘national body’. In other words, the only means for the experiments with the Surrealist object within the Osaka clubs to receive their full agency is by situating them in a wider context of their minor historical force, in relation to other Surrealist photographers and artists.

[114] Iida, Yumiko (2002), p. 36.
[115] Poivert, Michel (2009), p. 68.

Chapter 4

Potency of dispersion: Two-way mirrors in Surrealist photo-collages

Photo-collages were a prominent strand of Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s. They were also exhibited at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium in 1938 and complemented staged photographs produced among Osaka photographers in an aim to destabilise spatio-temporal linearity of the photographic representation, as a critique of the 'national body'. They were widely embraced by all the main Surrealist photographers around the country.

This chapter provides detailed readings of some of the best-achieved photo-collages in the decade to establish how all those practitioners were inter-connected in a singular assemblage. It argues that the use of photo-collages aimed to break away from any divisions, including differences between the varied photo-clubs, photography and art, but also Japan and the world. To achieve this argument, it additionally focuses on the motif of a two-way mirror as a distinct feature of a large number of these images, and explores the importance of temporality that they suggest.

Bending the surface

The structure of collage, functioning not in relation to a single referent but forming a constellation of possible meanings under a system of relations of its elements, is of central importance to Surrealism, as it operates similarly to a dream.[1] In the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Sigmund Freud defines how a dream is constituted from elements that are centred elsewhere, assembled in the dream-work through processes of condensation and displacement.[2] Collage was inherited in Surrealism from Dada, whereas it was Max Ernst who started to explore its potential in the Freudian sense. His works were first presented in public at a solo exhibition held at the Au Sans Pareil bookshop in Paris in 1921.[3] Since then, collage was celebrated as a quintessential Surrealist method, which is affirmed in André Breton's text in the catalogue of the exhibition.[4] The same view is also expressed in Louis Aragon's *The Challenge to Painting* (*La peinture au défi*, 1930), a text published on the occasion of a group exhibition of collages featuring Surrealist artists such as Ernst, Joan Miró, and Salvador Dalí and held at the Galerie Goemans in Paris.[5] After the *Manifesto of Surrealism* through to the end of the decade, however, automatism dominated Surrealist visual art production, until René Magritte and Dalí re-instituted the aspiration toward fixing the 'dream image', within a newly celebrated cultivation of the Surrealist object.[6]

In Japan, Yamanaka Chirū is known for his interest in Surrealist photo-collage, emerging from an active involvement in Surrealist circles in Nagoya since the turn of the decade when he was publishing translations of Surrealist

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[1] Michand, Philippe-Alain (2009). La coalescence et la suture. In: Bajac, Quentin (et al.), *La Subversion des Images*, *Surréalisme, Photographie, Film* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, p. 176.
[2] Freud, Sigmund ([1900] 1999). *The Interpretation of Dr*eams. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, p. 137.
[3] For further details about this exhibition see: Garbagna, Cristina (2007). *Collages: From Cubism to New Dada*. Milan: Electa, pp. 280-281. See also: Taylor, Brandon (2004). *Collage: The Making of Modern Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, pp. 57-58.
[4] Breton, André ([1920] 1978). Max Ernst. In: Rosemont, Franklin (ed.), *What is Surrealism? : Selected Writings*. New York: Monad. Distributed by Pathfinder Press, pp. 15-16.
[5] For the full text see: Aragon, Louis ([1930] 1965). *Les Collages.* Paris: Hermann.
[6] Ades, Dawn (1986). *Photomontage*. London; New York: Thames and Hudson, p.147.

texts and his own poetry in the magazine *Ciné*. A group that would enable development of this interest would be the New Plasticity Art Association, which also published a magazine under the same name, and to which Yamanaka contributed from the second volume.[7] Yamanaka, who at times adopted a French version of his last name, Tiroux, was by the latter part of the 1930s established as a prominent poet, critic and translator of Surrealist texts into Japanese. References to his visual art production, however, are at best scarce.

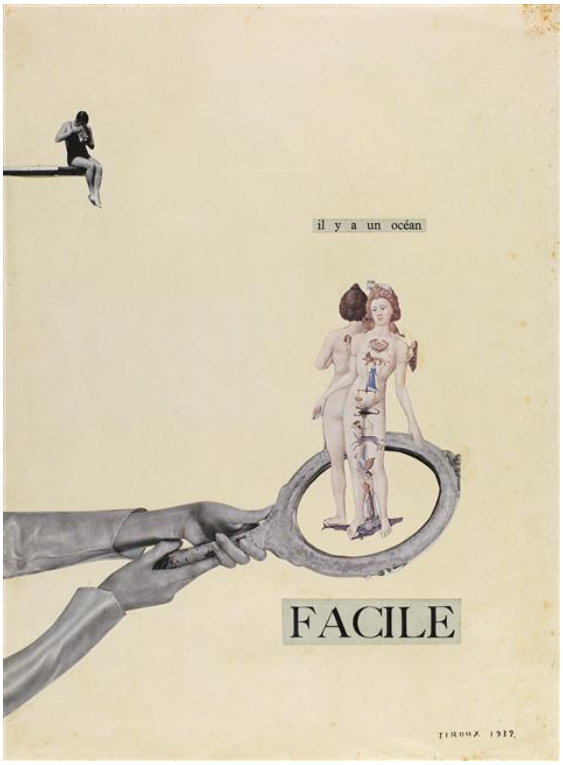

Figure 4.1**:** Yamanaka Chirū, *Il y a un océan facile*, 1937.

He is known to have exhibited two collages at the fifth exhibition of the New Plasticity at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art in March 1937. The same pair of collages was shown in June 1937 at the *Nagoya Exhibition of New Plasticity* (*Shin Zōkei Nagoyaten*), held at a gallery space on the eighth floor of the Mitsuzakaya department store.[8] The Japanese title of one of them -

[7] For all four issues of the magazine see: Omuka Toshiharu (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 2: Shūrurearisumu no bijutsu to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 2: Surrealist Art and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 59-103.
[8] Ibid, p. 127.

Light Hearted Sea (*Kigaru no umi*) - suggests it is the same collage that was included in the 2009 exhibition at the Pompidou Centre *Subversion of Images: Surrealism, Photography, Film*, under a title in French that reads *There is an Easy Ocean* (*Il y a un océan facile*) (Figure 4.1).[9] The collage shows a figure in the background filming from a diving board two female bodies inscribed with signs of the zodiac, standing with their backs to each other within a hand mirror held by a pair of female hands. The text contained in the image consists of two magazine cut outs. The word 'ocean' from the first possibly references Breton's photo-poem from 1935, featuring the phrase *L'Océan glacial*, that stands for an 'icy ocean', but also the Arctic Ocean, on the front of a tobacco packaging.[10] The second cut out evokes the title of the album *Easy* (*Facile*), a collection of photographs by Man Ray and poems written by Paul Éluard from 1935. Both references, to Breton's love poem and an intimate tribute to Man Ray's former model and Éluard's spouse Nusch, contextualise the image as an erotic fantasy, further insinuated in the tension created between the gaze of the cameraman and the nude female bodies.[11] Another layer of possible meaning, however, opens in the final lexical construction of the title: *il y a*, a French expression that reads in English as 'there is'. In the image, it affirms a paradoxical existence of an 'easy ocean' or a 'light hearted sea'. If the image is understood as an erotic fantasy, the ocean might imply a division between the sexes but the construction finally achieves its effect as it brings forth an experience of a contradiction expressed linguistically in the

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[9] Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.) (2005). *Yamanaka Chirū shoshi nenpu* [*Yamanaka Tiroux Chronologie et Bibliographie*]. Tokyo: Tanseisha, Meibun Shobō, p. 126. For how on both occasions that Yamanaka exhibited with the group in 1937, the exhibitions would also include works by Shimozato Yoshio, as well as two photo-collages that were produced collaboratively between the two see: Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.), *Nihon no shūruearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūruearisumuten jikkō iinkai, p.76. Yamanaka's biographer Kurosawa Yoshiteru confirmed in an interview with the author on December 8, 2012 that these two photo-collages are not known.

[10] For how Yamanaka also exhibited photographs of nine photo-poems produced by Breton at the Tokyo exhibition in the same year see: Ibid. For details of Breton's image, the first photo-poem he produced in 1935, see: Orban, Clara Elizabeth (1997). *The Culture of Fragments: Words and Images in Futurism and Surrealism*. Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, pp. 110-111.

[11] The general composition of the image would also be resonant with Georges Hugnet's work. For Yamanaka's writing about Hugnet see: Yamanaka Chirū ([1937] 1999). Chōgenjitsushugi to wa nanika [What is Surrealism]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūruearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 402-403. The same article includes Breton's 'page-object' that will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

idea of an ocean (or a sea) being 'easy' (or 'light hearted'). Foregrounding the contradiction, the image applies the Surrealist strategy of deliberately juxtaposing unrelated terms in order to create a site of potential for the appearance of the marvellous, the revelation of 'surreality' in reality. The invitation to imagine 'an easy ocean' provokes stepping out of the limiting boundaries of language and reason. The invitation is also suggested in the figural elements of the image, in the rendition of the hands holding a mirror as larger than the bodies that it circles. The French philosopher Michel Foucault describes this interconnectedness between the title and the content in the Surrealist image as a 'non relation' in his text dedicated to Magritte's famous drawing and later painting *This is Not a Pipe* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, 1926).[12] As in Magritte's case, in which the text from the title is written underneath a detailed drawing of a pipe, Yamanaka's image can be viewed to form a calligram, as both figural and textual parts of the collage invite the same contradictory experience, aimed at dissolving the opposition between the (visual) representation and the (textual) articulation.[13] Under the presumption that Yamanaka is quoting Breton's photo-poem in his use of the word 'ocean', the mirror seen in the image is also implied in the extended use of the French word *glace* in the title, as it does not only stand for 'ice' but for 'glass' or 'mirror' and also for 'transparency' or 'opacity'.[14] The use of a mirror motif thus reveals the final layer of the possible meaning, or that the paradoxical existence of 'an easy ocean' is situated on the 'other' side of the mirror, or that the title refers to the existence of an 'easy mirror', a portal that would allow transgression between different time-spaces through its transparent surface. A two-way mirror is suggested in the image by the absence of the actual surface of the hand mirror, in positioning of the female bodies as facing in opposite directions and in the different colouring of their hair. Such contrasting of oppositions would also resonate with Yamanaka's understanding of 'surreality' as a tension between the inner and the outer

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[12] Foucault, Michel ([1968] 1983). *This is Not a Pipe*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 36.
[13] Ibid, p. 21.
[14] Krauss, Rosalind (1979). Grids. *October*, Vol. 9, p. 59.

realities, embodying Breton's well known call for transcendence of any oppositions in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*.[15]

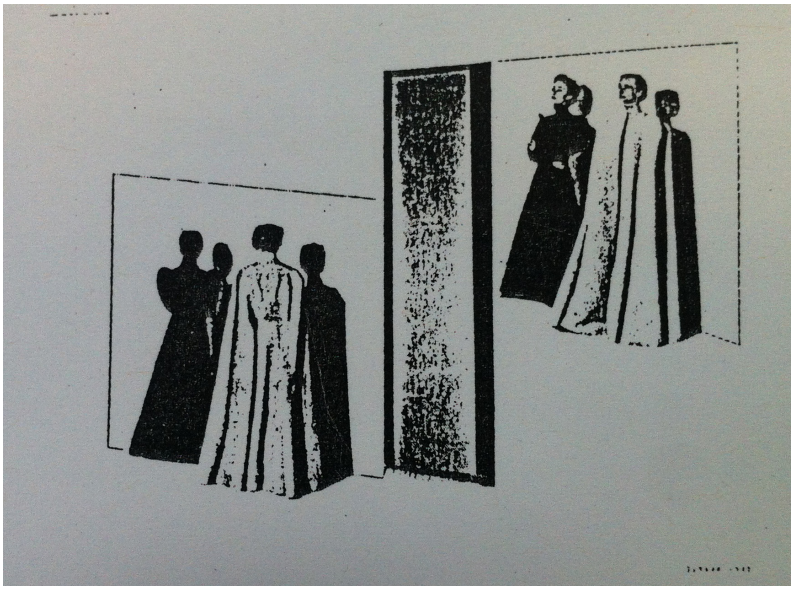

Figure 4.2: Yamanaka Chirū, *The Unsilvered Glass*, 1937.

Such a use of the motif of a mirror is further explored in the other collage that Yamanaka produced in 1937. It was published in the January 1938 issue of the *Shashin Saron* in Yamanaka's 'The Subject of Surrealism' under a caption *The Unsilvered Glass* (*Shakuda no nai kagami*) (Figure 4.2).[16] The image was also included in an earlier 'POCO A POCO, Introducing the Recent Illustrated Albums', published in the *Mizue* in June 1937.[17] In this text, it was titled as *Collage* (*Korāju*) and seen as an end piece illustration to a text discussing the

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[15] Yamanaka repeated this definition of Surrealism on many occasions, as per: Yamanaka Chirū ([1937] 1999), p. 402. For how: 'Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. Now, search as one may one will never find any other motivating force in the activities of the Surrealists than the hope in finding and fixing this point', see: Breton, André ([1929] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press pp. 123-124. Yamanaka's familiarity with this text is made evident in 'Internalisation of Surrealist Thought' (October 1936) discussed in Chapter 2.
[16] Yamanaka Chirū ([1938] 1999). Chōgenjitsushugi no taishō [The Subject of Surrealism]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 416-418.
[17] Yamanaka Chirū ([1937] 1999). POCO A POCO, Saikinno gashuno shōkai [POCO A POCO, Introducing the Recent Illustrated Albums]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 399-401.

recent Surrealism-related publications, including Julien Levy's *Surrealism*, Alfred Barr's *Fantastic Art: Dada, Surrealism* and Herbert Read's *Surrealism*, all from 1936. Neither of the texts offers any direct elaboration of the image, entitled by a chapter from Breton's and Philippe Soupault's collection *The Magnetic Fields*, which Yamanaka translated together with Nishiwaki Junzaburō for the fourth issue of the *Ciné* in July 1929.[18] It is in the later text, where he reuses it to accompany a more complex argument that the context for this collage should be looked for. In this article, Yamanaka set out to discuss the 'Subject of Surrealism' providing a background to the development of automatism by Breton, Soupault and Aragon prior to the official establishment of the Surrealist group in 1924. He also established how although the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire coined the word 'Surrealism' in 1916, the idea had its precursor in Gérard de Nerval's 'supernaturalism' (*chōshizen*), which played a role in 'devising an experimental category that aimed to achieve the outmost proximity to the state of dreaming'.[19] For Yamanaka, the exercise of automatism, first introduced in *The Magnetic Fields*, was understood as the ultimate 'subject' of Surrealism and was equally practised in poetry and painting as a method that aimed to outdo divisions established by the reasonable mind. However, understood as an 'abstract process requiring psychological interpretation and completely relying on chance', the method was understood as problematic in the practice of photography, as he observed how in order to 'reproduce an image sprouting from the unconscious, liberated mind, one needs to ignore the camera mechanism'.[20] Yamanaka exemplified this problem with a poetic image of a woman seen with an island for her head and holding a cloud in the mouth while breaking through a door saying how in order to reproduce it, photography necessarily requires taking images of all the four different elements – the woman's head, the island, the cloud and the door - and reassembling them anew. The only two ways, for Yamanaka, by which 'the inner reality laying behind the external' could be brought forward by the

[18] Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.) (2005), p. 12.
[19] Yamanaka Chirū ([1938] 1999), p. 416.
[20] Ibid.

means of the camera, were photo-collage and photo-object.[21] Such establishment of photo-collages and photo-objects as of relevance to Surrealism that draws from the original Surrealist texts is thus distinctly different from the point of emergence of Surrealist photomontage in 'new' photography based on Japanese Surrealist painting.[22]

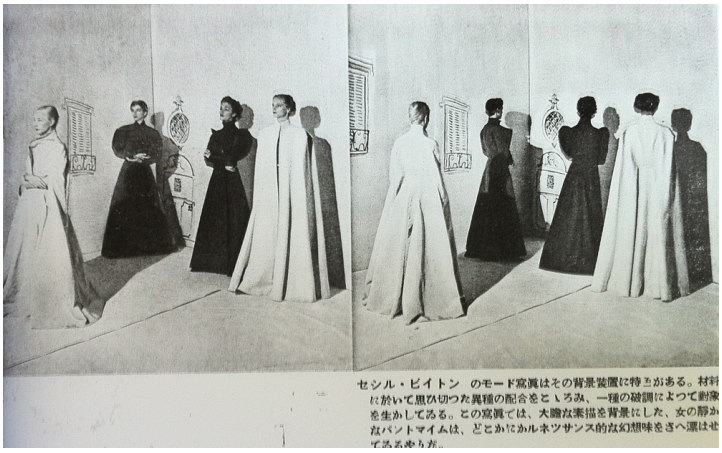

Figure 4.3: Cecil Beaton, *Untitled*, in: Takiguchi Shūzō, 'Photography and Surrealism', *Foto Taimusu*, February 1938, detail.

Yamanaka is primarily positioned in the context of the New Plasticity and its interest to forward the practice of Surrealism in visual arts, understanding photography as equal to painting and sculpture. The strong alignment of photography with art practices, as the text appears in an art-focused magazine, places his writing in tension with Takiguchi Shūzō, whose 'Photography and Surrealism' (February 1938) would be aimed primarily at a readership interested in photography and thus prioritise astraight shot. *The Unsilvered Glass* can also be regarded as a reflection of this tension, as two photographs on which it is based were also included in Takiguchi's later text (Figure 4.3).

[21] Referred to as *foto obuje* in a loanword and also translated in Japanese as *buttai shashin*, as per: Ibid, p. 41. For how the first was described as revolutionising painting whereas the second was seen as revolutionizing sculpture, and how as such they were emphasised as having a special function in Surrealism, with regard to works produced by Bellmer, Man Ray, Meret Oppenheim and Dalí see: Ibid.

[22] For Yamanaka's view how photomontage would not surpass rationalism whereas photo-collage would be a product of an irrational mind see: Yamanaka Chirū ([1938] 1999), p. 418.

The collage uses two photographs of Charles James's opera capes taken by the British photographer Cecil Beaton in 1936, originally published in *Vogue*.[23] Yamanaka combines them so as to create an illusion of a mirror existing in between the four female figures, a feature that was already implied in their original versions. In *The Unsilvered Glass*, the figures are combined so as to reflect in a similar but not exactly the same formation and thus create an effect of simultaneous existence of two different images on two different sides of the mirror. The significance of the mirror motif is accentuated in the title as it points to the first chapter of *The Magnetic Fields*. This chapter is named in French by a painting by Henri Matisse, *La Glace sans tain* (1913), indicating a frequent use of the 'unsilvered mirror' among painters of the day. David Gascoyne, translator of *The Magnetic Fields* in English, indicates nuances in the meaning of the word *glace* from this title in its French original:

> The word may be rendered literally as 'foil' or 'tin-foil', an equivalent of which may be 'silver-paper'; a dictionary defines it as an amalgam of tin or mercury applied to the back of a piece of glass to make it reflect light. Had I preferred to make a more purely literary transition, I might well have adopted the suggestion that this title should become *The Transparent Mirror* in English.[24]

Yamanaka would register this meaning of the word as a translator of *The Magnetic Fields* in Japanese, and *The Unsilvered Glass* suggests precisely the possibility that a mirror surface can be 'transparent', bended and transgressed, as suggested by the English writer Lewis Carroll in his story *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice Found There* (1871).

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[23] For how the photographer would be practising what became known as a 'Surrealist mode' in commercial and fashion photography during the 1930s see: Ades, Dawn (1986), p. 135.
[24] Gascoyne, David ([1920] 1997). Introduction. In: Breton, André; Éluard, Paul; Soupault, Philippe ([1933, 1920, 1930] 1997). *The Automatic Message; The Magnetic Fields; The Immaculate Conception*. Translated by David Gascoyne, Antony Melville and Jon Graham. Introduced by David Gascoyne and Antony Melville. London: Atlas Press, p. 45.

Figure 4.4: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Collage*, 1938.

A mirror understood as a 'foil' or 'silver paper' was also implicated in a photo-collage produced by Yamamoto Kansuke to accompany 'New Photo-Collage', Yamanaka's final article framing his interest in photo-collage and published in the July 1938 issue of the *Shashin Saron* (Figure 4.4).[25] In this article, he situated the production of Surrealist collages in relation to the collective features of the Surrealist exquisite corpse game. He compared it to the Japanese *tengu haiku* (*tengu haikai*), a modification of the original *haiku* verse produced by three different authors so as to achieve a nonsensical but arresting content.[26] The exquisite corpse, developed by the Surrealists on the premises of a children's game of Heads, Bodies and Legs (the equivalent of French *les petit papiers*) was first introduced to the public in the October 1927 issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (Nos. 9 and 10). It emblematised a strong belief in the power of collective games as a potential site for invoking the

[25] Yamanaka Chirū ([1938 (07)] 1999). Atarashii fotokoraju [New Photo-Collage]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 419-421.

[26] Japanese *haiku* verse, originating in the seventeenth century, is composed of three phrases, each of which needs to contain a specified number of phonetic units (in combination of five-seven-five). It is normally based on a juxtaposition of two different scenes and a resolution between them.

marvellous, informed by Freud's writing.[27] The insistence on collectivity involved in the game was politically charged, as it aimed to disrupt and collapse a seemingly unique materiality of the modernist work of art.[28] For Yamanaka, the motivation behind the production of the exquisite corpse game translates to photo-collage, which he names as 'tengu-photo' (*tengu shashin*) in this sense, as an ability to produce new and autonomous images from elements sourced elsewhere. In other words, photo-collage implicates the collaborative character of the exquisite corpse, as the elements it uses are not necessarily produced by a single author.

Yamamoto's *Collage* is constructed from a crumpled foil placed atop two black and white pieces of paper and against two different backgrounds. Read against Yamanaka's earlier 'The Subject of Surrealism' and with *The Unsilvered Glass* in mind, the 'foil' also implies a two-way mirror, with two opposing poles suggested in black and white colouring of the papers as well as in two different designs of the surfaces seen in the background. Crumpled foil seen in the centre of the image is folded with the black and white papers, whereas the line dividing two oppositional planes of the implied mirror is not straightforwardly drawn. In other words, a reflecting surface, which can be read as an implication of what the French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan has formulated as the 'mirror stage', or an anxiety created between the imagined and the represented self, disappears in the fold. The fold thus suggests a more complex structure that presupposes a simultaneous existence of oppositions, in the same space but also in the same time.[29] As Neil Matheson has pointed out, such an indistinguishable merging of two different spatio-temporal planes of reality, or 'breaking out of that imaginary, mirrored relationship', becomes a requirement for gaining a critical view of the

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[27] For the relationship between the game and Freud's writing see: Kern, Anne M. (2009). From One Exquisite Corpse (in)to Another: Influences and Transformations from Early to Late Surrealist Games. In: Kochar-Lindgren, Kanta and Schneideman, Davis and Denlinger, Tom (eds.), *The Exquisite Corpse: Chance and Collaboration in Surrealism's Parlor Game*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 3-29.

[28] For how the 'exquisite corpse exemplifies one manner in which difference is produced as a means of disrupting the normalizing of the hegemonic power of the current cultural regime' see: Ibid, pp. xxii –xxii.

[29] For the tension between 'a fragmented body-image' and 'a form of its totality' see: Lacan, Jacques ([1949] 2001). *Écrits: a Selection*. London: Routledge, p. 5.

social reality, and a means of escaping 'the trap' of the Lacanian 'mirror phase'.[30] Yamanaka clearly points out how the function of a translucent two-way mirror draws primarily on automatism and follows Breton's well-known definition of an image as nothing more than a window looking out to an unknown world of the unconscious mind.[31] As Haim Finkelstein has noted, such a close link between automatism and the unsilvered two-way mirror indicated in *The Magnetic Fields*, 'sums up the fundamental dialectics of transparency and opacity involved in the process of automatic writing'.[32] As Finkelstein has shown, the two-way mirror quality subsumed by different surfaces has thus been regarded as one of the main characteristics of Surrealist painting.[33] The basic premise of the use of two-way mirrors in Surrealist painting was that the painting-window is simultaneously a reflective surface, also indebted to a common notion of vision as reflecting out to the world of objects and not the other way around.[34]

However, an interrelated potential to break away from homogenised linearity in both spatial and temporal terms in Surrealist collage was recognised by a German cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer. In his essay 'Photography' (1927), Kracauer described how advancements in the modern photographic technology supported historicist thinking, offering a spatial continuum to the temporal continuum it advocated.[35] Therefore, destruction of an insinuated coherence of the surface in photography precedes the appearance of history.[36] The understanding of photography in terms of coherence, for Kracauer, is differentiated from an artwork. Whereas in the latter the meaning of an object is assumed in spatial terms, in photography 'the spatial

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[30] Matheson, Neil (2012). *Fear of Reflections*: The Photoworks of Paul McCarthy. In: Bleyen, Mieke (ed.), *Minor Photography: Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p. 74.
[31] 'It is impossible for me to envisage a picture as being other than a window, and my first concern is then to know what it *looks out on*', as per: Breton, André ([1928] 1972). *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor. New York: Harper and Row, p. 2.
[32] Finkelstein, Haim (2007). Screen and Layered Depth: Surrealist Painting and the Conceptualization of the Mental Space. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, Vol. 51, p. 183.
[33] For an in-depth study of the motif see: Finkelstein, Haim (2007 [2]). *The Screen in Surrealist Art and Thought*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
[34] Finkelstein, Haim (2007), p. 196.
[35] Kracauer, Siegfried ([1927] 1995). *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Translated by Thomas Y Levin. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, pp. 49-50.
[36] Ibid.

appearance of an object is its meaning'.[37] Thus in order to evolve from representing 'likeness', photography needs to show the 'transparency' of objects.[38] The possibility to show the transparency of objects Kracauer describes as 'a magic mirror that reflect those who consult it not as they appear but rather as they wish to be or as they fundamentally are'.[39] The main role of photography, for Kracauer, is to 'make visible the yet unseen', a process that 'smashes natural reality and reconfigures the fragments' and is related to a dream process, in which the fragments are turned into 'strange constructs by means of association'.[40] His view of photography is situated in a polarised discourse developed in the Western Europe and the US when a differentiation between the documentary and the fetishistic, or the scientific and the magical photography was rooted in the aesthetic theories of the time.[41] Kracauer values the latter more, similarly to the Surrealists, and this preference is related to an understanding of history as equally non-linear as to that of the seemingly coherent surface of the photographic print. In other words, fragmentation and fracturing of the surface in photography, its bending and transgressing, as advanced by Surrealist collage, bring forward a particular Surrealist historiography.

In Yamamoto's *Collage*, merging of all the elements in the image would thus suggest not only a fragmented but a folded space, one requiring a similarly folded view of time. In analogy to dreams, it appropriates the potential that certain elements from past memories fold with the present in the dream-work. The concern with the historical time on the side of Yamanaka and Yamamoto would be critical of the political climate of the day, as a means to transcend the historical ills generated by modernity in Japan was offered in the concept of the 'national body' (*kokutai*) by proposing an alternative time and space outside of it.[42] Numerous attempts were made among the Japanese

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[37] Ibid, p. 52
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Giles, Steve (2007). Making Visible, Making Strange: Photography and Representation in Kracauer, Brecht and Benjamin. *New Formations*, No. 61, p. 66.
[41] Ibid, p. 65.
[42] Iida, Yumiko (2002). *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 22.

intellectuals, such as Kon Wajirō and Tosaka Jun, to reanimate the crisis in which everyday life experience was entrapped by the contemporary state of modernity, defining their project as 'quotidianisation of philosophy' and rethinking the relationship between the material space (of the city) and time.[43] Kon's project was named 'modernology' and focused solely on the experience of streets, whereas Tosaka opted for the substitution of the experience of 'reality' with that of 'actuality', following Walter Benjamin's project to situate the unravelling of history in the present. As he was writing from a Marxist position and in critique of the rising militarism, Tosaka was imprisoned under the Peace Maintenance Law in 1938 and the right-wing faction of the Kyoto School of philosophy that he belonged to, took over to develop a theory of the unique Japanese experience of modernity and its possibility to 'overcome' it in aesthetics.[44] Harry Harootunian describes the philosophical thought in Japan of the time:

> What momentarily appeared to link the historical present to the future, the local to the global, turned back on itself to transform the particular into the exceptional, the present into the past, everydayness into eternal values of feeling that create art.[45]

In other words, as a result of the failure to situate the political in the everyday present, a proposition of an alternative modernity demanded that aesthetics was placed above reason. As much as the space of this alternative existence was located outside of the world by Japan's geographical position, its temporality similarly claimed asynchronicity from the rest of the world by situating the present in the past. As Iida Yumiko has pointed out, situating Japan in an exclusive nationalist space was both a departure from the historical and an internalisation of history.[46]

Against such a background, Yamanaka's visualisation of the idea that two different spatio-temporal realities can exist at the same time, pointed out

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[43] Harootunian, Harry D. (2000). *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice and the Question of Everyday Life.* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 21.
[44] Tosaka Jun passed away in prison in 1945 and his writing was published posthumously.
[45] Harootunian, Harry D. (2000), p. 155.
[46] Ibid, p. 36.

additionally in the domain of Surrealist collage by the collective character of the exquisite corpse game, becomes of high relevance. Yamamoto extends the same idea into a proposition that no clear line can be drawn between any divisions and that they are immanently folded with each other. Whereas the spatial rupturing of translucent surfaces is immanent to photo-collages, it is the implied interconnectedness with an equal dislocation of temporal linearity, as pointed out by Kracauer, that this chapter would like to highlight. Offering the means of transgressing all oppositions, the use of two-way mirrors would thus also indicate a critique of the historical premise of the 'national body' as situated outside of modernity.

Dreams and life

Figure 4.5: Abe Yoshifumi, *Fairy's Distance*, 1938, cover page.

Figure 4.6: Nagata Isshū, *Untitled*, c.1930-39.

The motif of a mirror was well known to Takiguchi and experimented with in the work produced alongside his co-members at the Avant-Garde Photography Association. It is seen in Abe Yoshifumi's cover image for *The Fairy's Distance* (*Yōsei no kyori*) album in 1937 (Figure 4.5). Consisting of Takiguchi's poetry and Abe's monochrome abstract illustrations seen together

on each spread, the album was aiming to enwrap the reader into a 'strange world'.[47] The cover page, showing a mirror within a mirror, also symbolised the intertwining of the two artists' visions, as Takiguchi would write based on his impressions of Abe's images.[48] Takiguchi would also collaborate closely with Nagata Isshū, who was equally strongly inclined towards both photo-collage and the mirror motif. This interest is seen in an untitled image composed of two photographs showing himself and Takiguchi taking a bath (Figure 4.6.). In the photograph, the surface of the water is used as a 'two-way mirror' to construct an illusion in which their reflection in the water is reversed. In one photograph, we see Nagata on the left with a towel on his head whereas in the reversed mirror image in the water we see another photograph showing Takiguchi wearing the towel.[49] The image thus uses the motif of a mirror to invoke both a defamiliarised impression and a simultaneous existence of both conscious and unconscious states of the mind.

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[47] Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (1995). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu* [Japanese Surrealism]. Tokyo: Sekai Shisōsha, p. 41.

[48] For how the collaboration would result from their first meeting in the previous year and due to a shared interest in Surrealism, as well as for how Abe's interest in Surrealism can be traced back to around the age of nineteen, at the beginning of his career in 1932, see: Hamada Mayumi (2010). Senzen no Abe Yoshifumi no katsudō: Takiguchi Shūzō to no kankei wo chūshin ni [Abe Yoshifumi's Prewar Activities: Focus on the Relationship with Takiguchi Shūzō]. *Niigata Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan Kenkyū Kiyō* [Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art Research Bulletin], No 9, p. 10. For how Abe was a member of a group set up by Takiguchi in 1936, called 'Avant-Garde Painters Group' see: Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.), *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, p. 144.

[49] In Japanese public baths, wet towels are often worn on heads to optimize heat of the body.

Figure 4.7: Nagata Isshū, 'My Work, Particularly Nerval's *Dream and Life*', *Foto Taimusu*, July 1938, detail.

Nagata's interest in photo-collage is affirmed in 'My Work, Particularly Nerval's *Dream and Life*' published in the July 1938 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, where he discussed another collage published for the occasion in a correspondence with Takiguchi. [50] The image is captioned with a passage from a book by Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) known as *Aurélia* or *Dream and Life* (1855) (Figure 4.7).[51] Nagata explained in a note addressed to Takiguchi how his intention was to produce an image that would not illustrate Nerval's text but investigate how it could be interpreted visually.[52] His choice of a photo-collage was explained in the fact that the artistic achievement of straight photography was in most cases very low, adding how his interest in Surrealism was strong but that he himself was not a Surrealist.[53] Takiguchi

[50] Nagata Isshū (1938). Watashi no sakuhin, omoni neruberu yume to jinsei ni tsuite [My Work, Particularly Nerval's *Dream and Life*]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 82-84.
[51] The passage reads: 'On the crest of a bluish mountain, a little flower is born. Forget-me-not! The glistering gaze of a star plays on it for an instant, and an answer is heard in a soft foreign tongue. –*Myosotis!*', as per: Nerval, Gérard de ([1855] 1996). *Aurélia and Other Writings*. Translated by Robert Duncan and Marc Lowenthal. Boston, Ma.: Exact Change, p. 66. For how Nagata uses the word 'Himalaya' in this passage see: Nagata Isshū (1938), p. 82.
[52] Ibid, p. 83.
[53] For how Nagata dismissed the artistic potential of straight photography adding how such a comment might inflict on him an opposition from the 'photography world' (*shashin kai*), see: Ibid.

wrote in a response saying that he is a big admirer of Nerval himself and complimented Nagata's intention to produce such a work.[54] He mentioned Man Ray's and Éluard's collaborative work (on the album *Easy*) as an example of 'illustrating' poetry with photography, whereas he saw Nagata's collage as trying to go beyond such an illustrative relation between an image and a text, and that it was thus worth praising for its ability to transport the viewer to a place beyond recognition. He added that he himself felt how he was and wasn't a Surrealist at the same time, as their activities were based outside of a single group's 'ism'.[55]

Famously, Nerval opens *Aurélia* with a statement saying: 'Dreams are a second life', preceding Surrealist explorations of the site of dreaming as a method offering a possibility to break away from the constraining rules of reason.[56] Breton affirmed the significance of Nerval's writing in the *Manifesto of Surrealism* with regard to the very word 'Surrealism', which was previously elaborated in Yamanaka's 'Subject of Surrealism'.[57] In the later 'Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism', a text that he published in the wake of the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London, Breton established the further importance of Nerval's writing as setting a foundation for a Surrealist mode of perception that 'resides in the necessity of passionately interrogating certain situations in life characterised by the fact that they appear to belong *at the same time* to the real series and to the ideal series of events'.[58] In the same text, he explained the 'objective humour' as another Surrealist mode of perception to have had its precedent in English writers such as Carroll.[59] The potential to achieve an effect described by Takiguchi as 'transportation to a

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid, p. 84. For how the comment can be read as a reflection of the intellectual climate of the day (rather than solely indicating Surrealism), as proliferation of different 'isms' in the previous decade was a wide-spread tendency, including *Shizen-shugi* and *Minpon-shugi* (People-centrism, the Japanese notion of democracy), *Bunka-shugi* (Culturalism), *Jinkaku-shugi* (Personality-ism), *Tettei-kojin-shugi* (New Feminism), *Shakai-shugi* (Social-ism), *Museifu-shugi* (Anarchism) see: Iida, Yumiko (2002), p. 29.
[56] Nerval, Gérard de ([1855] 1996), p. 3.
[57] For how Apollinaire's term was chosen as a tribute to the recently deceased poet whereas Nerval's 'supernaturalism' could have equally prevailed see: Breton, André ([1924] 1974), p. 25.
[58] Breton, André ([1936] 1978). Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism. In: Rosemont, Franklin (ed.), *What is Surrealism? : Selected Writings*. New York: Monad. Distributed by Pathfinder Press, p. 204.
[59] Ibid.

place beyond recognition' in Nagata's photo-collage is therefore achieved through Nerval's concern with how the dream-work enables things to exist *at the same time* on different time-space planes. The mode of perception thus provoked is closely related to the 'objective humour', which allows visualisation of the possibility through the notion of Carroll's two-way mirror.

The collage is produced from clippings sourced in foreign fashion magazines. As Nagata was a regular columnist for the magazine writing about foreign fashion photography, the source material would be easily available to him.[60] It shows a photograph of a mountain with three female heads placed atop its peaks, complemented with a cut out of female hands seen in the foreground. The placement of the hands suggests a three-headed mountain-body that invokes Nerval's story *Sylvie* (1853), in which he described his imaginary love for three different women, confusing temporal linearity of the narration.[61] The image thus becomes an 'embodiment of time', with three different heads suggesting also the past, the present and the future.[62] In this way, it also reflects on Takiguchi's comment how their practice exists within and outside of Surrealism at the same time. Within the discussion taking place simultaneously with regard to the relation between Surrealism and photography, the underlining of their own position of liminality on the side of the members of the Tokyo club signals an overlapping interest between Yamanaka and Takiguchi. Imai Shigeru's practice is the main point of the overlap between the clubs in Nagoya and Tokyo, as his 'Surrealist Photography Memorandum' (October 1938) not only suggests how the 'harmony of conscious and unconscious thinking' is best achieved in photo-collage but also ascribes to the use of translucent surfaces, the sea and the

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[60] As a former member of the prosecuted proletarian art groups, it is not surprising that Nagata would make sure to publically downplay his interest in Surrealism. For further examples of Nagata's interest in photo-collage, and especially the use of the motif of a broken statue see: Nagata Isshū (1938). Sibutsu seisaku no katei [Process Behind Creating Still Life]. Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 6-7. For an example of Nagata's interest into the motif of a mannequin see: *Kamera Āto* (1939). Vol. 10, No. 6, unpaginated.

[61] Nerval, Gérard de ([1855] 1996), pp. 73-114. For how Takiguchi also described the image as suggesting a single body with three heads see: Nagata Isshū (1938), p. 84.

[62] For the use of phrase 'embodiment of time' see: Kristeva, Julia ([1992]1993). *Proust and the Sense of Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 1.

sky, to enable bending of linearity in the untitled images accompanying the text.

Figure 4.8: Imai Shigeru, *Untitled*, 1938.

Figure 4.9: Sakata Minoru, *Crisis*, 1938.

Whereas the sea is a site of displacement in Imai's *In Flight*, another image in the text uses the sky towards the same end, showing female hands surrounded with round objects in the clouds (Figure 4.8). Imai's interest in photo-collage is also developed in the New Plasticity Art Association, similarly to Yamanaka. His 'Montage in Painting', published in the first volume of the group's magazine in October 1935 cited Aragon's distinction between two different types of collage in *The Challenge to Painting* and aligned his own interest with the type practiced by Ernst.[63] Aragon understands this type of collage, developing after 1914, as achieving more than a purely aesthetic experience of 'enriching the palette', aiming instead to 'enrich the world' by its material qualities, functioning on the equal basis to the language.[64] Imai's photo-collage thus displaces unrelated elements and rearranges them into a

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[63] Imai Shigeru ([1935] 2001). Kaiga ni okeru montaju ni tsuite [Montage in Painting]. In: Omuka Toshiharu (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 2: Shūrurearisumu no bijutsu to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 2: Surrealist Art and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 65.

[64] For how 'Aragon distinguishes between two quite distinct categories of collage: the first is that in which the stuck element is of value for its representational qualities; the second, for its material qualities. In the first, he suggests, collage operates only as an enrichment of the palette, while the second is prophetic of the direction it is to take, 'where the thing expressed is more important than the manner of expressing it, where the object represented plays the role of a word' – the direction taken by Ernst' see: Ades, Dawn (1986), p. 15.

separate assembly so as to point at a meaning located elsewhere, but uses the potential offered by the skyline to signal to the division between the dream and reality, the conscious and the unconscious mind or inner and outer realities. Another use of the skyline reappears in Sakata MInoru's image seen at the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium, titled *Crisis* (*Kiki*) (Figure 4.9). This time, it blurs the division between a curve of a female neck and a slice of the lotus root (*renkon*), also evoking his previous *Energetic Body Curve*. A superimposed photograph of the sky placed in the foreground adds to the juxtaposition of the neckline and the root, functioning as another translucent surface that blurs elements of the image across different spatio-temporal planes. Given Nagata's celebration of photo-collage in July of the same year, it is not surprising that he accredits the image as the best achieved in the exhibition.[65] Sakata's practice develops in a tangential relation to that of the New Plasticity after his move to Nagoya, and it also provides a link between Nagoya and Osaka at the symposium, as he was included in the Naniwa's exhibition in 1938. Given the interest in Surrealist collage by both Nagata and Imai expressed in the same year, and a close relation to Takiguchi in their production, photo-collage truly proves as prone to expression of Surrealist content, as it was suggested by Yamanaka, being also embraced in the Tokyo club on a significant scale. The use of oneiric iconography further facilitates its production, aiming to break away from both spatial and temporal singularity. Regardless of Yamamoto's stepping out of this frame, however, the main site for the delivery of displacement in photo-collage remains that of the body.

Collapsing the grid

Yamanaka's Surrealist activities implicated and affected Yamamoto's work directly, and the two would collaborate throughout the decade.[66] He also

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[65] Zen'ei shashin zadankai [Avant-Garde Photography Symposium] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 9, p. 25.

[66] For how Yamamoto's *Development Thought of a Human...Mist and Bedroom* (1932), one of the best-known Surrealist images from the decade and one of the earliest records of

worked in a close relationship to Takiguchi, regardless of the differences in their preferences or opinions. However, the importance of Yamanaka's work for Osaka photographers and especially Hanawa Gingo is less apparent, regardless of the fact that the two would cross-reference each other on a number of occasions. For instance, in 'Development of Surrealism in the Photographic image' (April 1938) Hanawa also described the exquisite corpse in terms of the Japanese game *tengu haiku*.[67] In the 'New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life' (September 1938), he quoted Yamanaka's phrase how 'the internal reality lays behind the external', ascribing it to Sakata.[68] Such an implicitly aligned view can also be identified in Yamanaka's acknowledging of 'object-photography', as prominently practiced in Osaka, as equally valuable to photo-collage in the delivery of automatism through photography.[69] However, as much as such interconnectedness between different clubs existed in the years prior to the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium, photographs produced by the Osaka clubs were not discussed for their preoccupation with disturbing spatial and temporal linearity, or for pushing the lines between divisions, but for their technical achievement and formal characteristics.

Surrealist photo-collages in Japan was produced by the artist at the age of nineteen and under the impact of such publications as the *Shi to Shiron* and *Ciné* see: Kaneko, Ryūichi (2013). The Position of Kansuke Yamamoto: Reexamining Japan's Modern Photography. In: Hamaya, Hiroshi and Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.), *Japan's Modern Divide: the Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto* (Exh. Cat.). Los Angeles, California: J. Paul Getty Museum, p. 167.

[67] Hanawa Gingo (1938). Shashinga ni okeru chōgenjitsushugi no hatten [Development of Surrealism in the Photographic Image]. *Foto Taimsu*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 32.

[68] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001). Seibutsu no shashinga no shinhatten [New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 221.

[69] Such Yamanaka's comment by all means extends to the practice of Nagoya and Tokyo photographers, as it will be further discussed in the following Chapter 5.

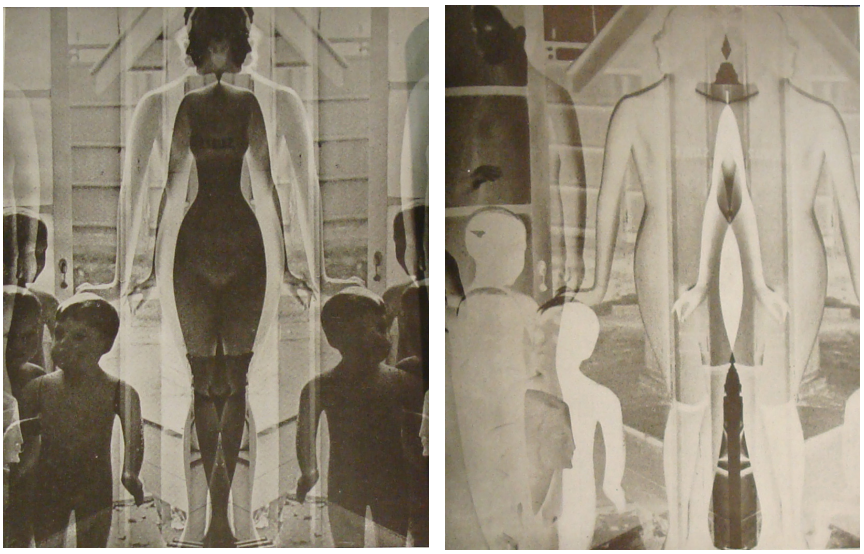

Figure 4.10: Ueda Bizan, *Exhibition* and *Exhibition A*, 1938.

For instance, two photographs that Ueda Bizan exhibited for the occasion were titled as *Exhibition* (*Kōkan*) and *Exhibition A* and were produced as the results of the collective shooting session at the mannequin factory in Kyoto (Figure 4.10). Offering superimpositions of positive and negative renditions of a photograph showing several mannequins, the images offer another take on the motif of a two way mirror in which the composition is complicated by the fact that the main female mannequin in the centre is seen looking inwards, towards an inverted image of itself, whereas smaller children mannequins are looking in the other direction, placed with their back towards the mirror surface. An attempt to render a view of complementing reversed mirror images or to produce a synthesis between the two is especially apparent in *Exhibition*, where the female mannequin's reversed parts merge into a seemingly unified figure. Regardless of this ambitious attempt, the images were discussed at the meeting with regard to the relationship between photography and painting.[70]

[70] For how Abe asserted that for some reason the work reminded him of a Post-Impressionist artist Georges-Pierre Seurat, whereas Nagata did not like the idea that photography should be compared to painting see: Zen'ei shashin zadankai (1938), p. 23.

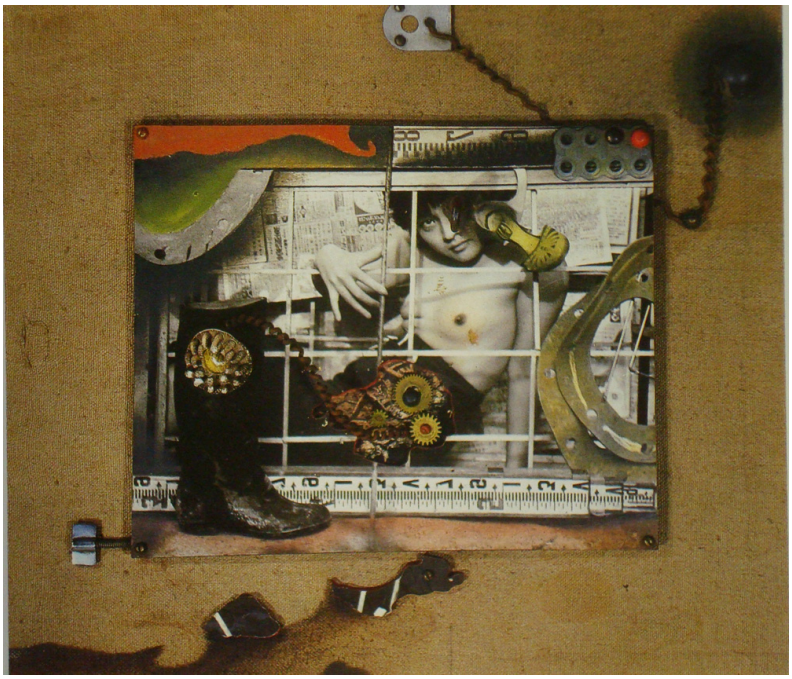

Figure 4.11: Hanawa Gingo, *Complex Imagination*, 1938.

The practice of Osaka photographers would, however, pay a significant tribute to Yamanaka's view of photo-collage as better suited to visualise poetic imagination than a straight shot, at least during 1937 and 1938. This link can be best explored in a collage produced by Hanawa in 1938 and titled *Complex Imagination* (*Fukuzatsu naru sōzō*) (Figure 4.11). The image is a composite of three superimposed layers. The first shows a semi-nude female model placed against a background of newspapers and behind white bars in a provocative pose directly looking at the camera. The second shot shows the first photograph framed by a variety of objects, including a boot, a meter and a wire, and is pinned to the background. In the third layer, the second shot is attached to components of a machine, with a bolt in its bottom left and a chain operating a wheel towards the top right. Functioning as a *mise en abyme*, placing of an image within an image, the collage implies a reading of the objectified barred figure as controlled, or integrated with the machine. The positioning of the body in constellation with a machine, together with a type of *horror vacui* spacing, is indicative of a Dadaist montage rather than a

Surrealist photo-collage.[71] However, its Surrealist effect and insistence on 'complexity' of imagination required to perceive it as such demand an extended reading.

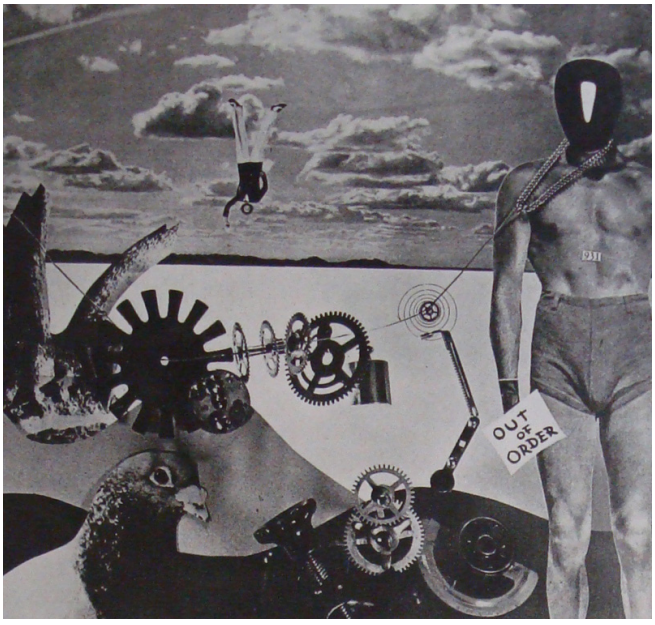

Figure 4.12: Matsubara Jūzō*, Untitled*, 1935.

It should be noted that as a combination of Dadaist and Surrealist iconography, *Complex Imagination* would have its precedent in Japan in an untitled image produced by Matsubara Jūzō, a member of the Ashiya Photo Club.[72] In an untitled photo-collage from 1935, Matsubara applies a similar iconography of situating a body in constellation with machine parts (Figure 4.12). In this case, an oppressed unconscious suggested in *Complex Imagination* by placing of the body behind bars is evoked by a chain seen around the neck of a male figure holding the sign 'Out of Order'. The 'man-machine' is rendered malfunctioning by parts of a disassembled clock seen

[71] Takeba, Joe (2003). The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.), *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press p. 150. For Dadaist interest in hybrid relations between the human and machine see: Biro, Matthew (2009). *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[72] For how the main interest of this photographer, who joined the Ashiya Photo Club around 1933 and was a contributor to the *Kōga*, was experimenting with the Surrealist objects in producing photo-collages by applying the displacement technique see: Ashiya Shiritsu Bijutsu Hakubutsukan (ed.) (1998). *Ashiya kamera kurabu 1930-1942: ashiya no bijutsu wo saguru* [Ashiya Camera Club 1930-1942: Exploring the Beauty of Ashiya]. Ashiya: Ashiya Shiritsu Bijutsu Hakubutsukan, p. 22.

connected to the chain around his neck. However, the image is also complemented by an inverted view of another male figure seen in the background, floating upside down from clouds seen above a sea. The sea and the sky thus offer two mirror surfaces, enabling reversal of the classic Dadaist representation of a hybrid human body. The final element of the image, a bird seen in the foreground suggests that the liberation of the mind (from oppression of the capitalist or war machinery) is achieved by imagination, as Surrealists would often apply the motif towards this end.[73]

Against Matsubara's example, Hanawa's *Complex Imagination* also suggests the 'out of order-ness' of the machine by a disassembled view of its parts. However, it can also be seen as offering an escape route to the body behind bars if its grid-like structure is understood as another transgressive screen. In Hanawa's case, the mirror quality of the grid is less apparent as it is complicated by superimposition with two additional surfaces. Such a symbolical value of the grid, as suggesting first a window and thereon a mirror is recognised by Rosalind Krauss.[74] For Krauss, the nature of a grid is bivalent: it can perform either a 'centrifugal' or 'centripetal' movement, suggesting either an extension of the picture surface outwards or an introjection of the outer world into the interior of the work.[75] However, in certain cases it deliberately remains ambiguous and implies both directions, as in Piet Mondrian's painting. In 'Avant-Garde Style in Photography' (May 1938) Hanawa identified the ambivalent character of Mondrian's painting, highlighting it as an example of a 'plus-minus style'.[76] The indefinite character of grids and the inability to separate one frame from another established for Hanawa the complexity of Mondrian's painting, which he compared in this text

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[73] For how 'the theme of birds, flight and freedom was linked to Surrealist faith in the importance of imagination over the earthbound rational world' see: Montagu, Jemima (2002). *The Surrealists: Revolutionaries in Art and Writing 1919-35*. London: Tate Publishing, p. 37. Max Ernst had an alter ego, the bird Lop-Lop that often appeared in his work, most probably due to his physical appearance.
[74] Krauss, Rosalind (1979), pp. 58-59.
[75] Ibid, pp. 59-6.0
[76] Hanawa Gingo (1938). Shashinga ni okeru zen'ei teki sakufū, Osaka no aru shashin kurabu reikai ni te hanasu [Avant-Garde Style in Photography, Discussion from a Monthly Meeting of an Osaka Photo Club]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 5, p. 26.

to the Japanese paper doors and windows (*shōji*), applying the same method of a 'grid within a grid'.[77]

Complex Imagination was exhibited at the 27th *Namiten* in 1938, the annual show of the Osaka-based Naniwa Photo Club together with works by Ueda, Yasui Nakaji, Koishi Kiyoshi and Kobayashi Meison.[78] Hanawa thus described it at a symposium of the club organised to accompany the exhibition, and the report from the session was published in the September 1938 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, also including a transcript from the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium. He explained how the shoot was motivated by his admiration for artists living in the Osaka area with whom he wanted to collaborate experimenting with the Surrealist exquisite corpse.[79] It was Tarui Yoshio who was in charge of the original shoot, but a straight shot of the model with objects assembled around her, including a reference to Mondrian's painting in the use of a Japanese wooden doorframe for construction of the grid, was insufficient to produce the desired 'complex' effect. Therefore, a Surrealist painter Fukufuji Isamu, a member of the Independent Art Group, went to a local flea market and randomly selected a box of objects suggesting that they should use them to enrich the original shot.[80] As Fukufuji selected the objects randomly, they were not as adequate, and they ended up constructing the further layers by composing arrangements out of a plastic fly swatter, fishhook and electric meter, with the process continuing into the night.[81] The image caused a stir at the meeting as a hybrid mixture of different practices but revealed Hanawa's work as closely related to the Surrealist art circles, complementing his engagement with the Osaka based amateur photo clubs. For Hanawa, such interaction between photography and art was the means of achieving a true Surrealist image.[82]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Yasui Nakaji (et al.) (2004), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha, p. 251.
[79] Naniwa shashinten zadankai [Symposium on the Occasion of the Naniwa Photography Exhibition] (1938). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 9, p. 27.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] For how the production of the image attests to Hanawa's interest in Surrealist photography via integration with art circles, which was also suggested in his question posed at the symposium: 'Is a Surrealist photograph not likely to expand significantly if we tried to jump

The complexity of imagination suggested by Hanawa thus departs from Matsubara's understanding of the word to suggest a liberated mind. It is transferred into the domain of a collaborative process behind the creation of the first layer of the image, indicating a 'collective-artist-machine'. The surface of the second layer, showing the model enframed by the bars against a selection of objects reveals a standard practice of Osaka photographers to substitute the body with 'phantom objects', which become operational on the 'other side' of the grid-mirror as its defamiliarised reflection. The final surface, or that of the newspapers placed behind the model points to a layer of the everyday, reversing the main view to the perspective of the collective-artist's gaze. Various layers of the image function as a multiple superimposed image, and indeed as a grid within a grid, and also suggest another rupture in both spatial and temporal terms.[83] *Complex Imagination* thus reveals a sustained investment in destabilising photographic representation through experiments with photo-collage as another prominent strand of research for Osaka photographers, achieved through integration with the Surrealist art circles in production of collective projects. Whereas the standard mode of the collective shoots, exhibitions and publications by the members of various Osaka clubs would be easier to register in the public domain, an expanded field of overlapping practices to those with the Surrealist artists working in varied media would not be as apparent, as they would mostly be seen in different publications and exhibitions. The fact that Tarui also participated in the production of *Complex Imagination* is not without relevance, as his work would further develop the experiments with superimposition using the motif of a grid, and should be understood with such a context in mind. Finally, *Complex Imagination* also establishes how staged photography experimenting with the Surrealist objects, the main focus of interest in the Osaka clubs, would also have an implied temporal dimension, as the process of the object substitution would actualise on the 'other side' of reality.

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further across the limits called photography', see: Nishimura Tomohiro (2008). *Nihon geijutsu shashinshi: ukiyoe kara dejikame made* [History of Art Photography in Japan: from Ukiyo-e to Digital Camera]. Kokubunji-shi: Bigaku Shuppan, p. 281.

[83] For how one of the qualities of the grid is 'its capacity to serve as a paradigm or model for the antidevelopmental, the antinarrative, the antihistorical' see: Krauss, Rosalind (1979), p. 64.

Figure 4.13: Tarui Yoshio, *Genealogy of Inscription*, 1938.

At the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium, Tarui exhibited a colour photogram of a disassembled clock entangled with a wire-like construction and titled *Genealogy of Inscription* (*San-fu*) (Figure 4.13). In a poem accompanying the image he explained how the light producing it 'came from the other side of a dream' (*moboroshi no kanata*).[84] The image contains several references. It evokes a critique of the reasonable mind in the view of a disassembled clock, it also implies the 'other side' of a mirror in a state of dreaming from where its light originates, and alludes to a view of the body behind an abstracted wired construction. All of these elements would be prominently featured in a number of works by the Kansai-based photographers and thus legible in a wider context of their production. However, inter-textual means of achieving a primarily Surrealist meaning did not become the major subject of the discussion, but rather its use of colour. The Tokyo club was concerned about how the use of colour could sidetrack

[84] Zen'ei shashin zadankai (1938), p. 14.

the viewer from the content in a similar manner as the introduction of 'talkies' imposed changes to the cinema.[85]

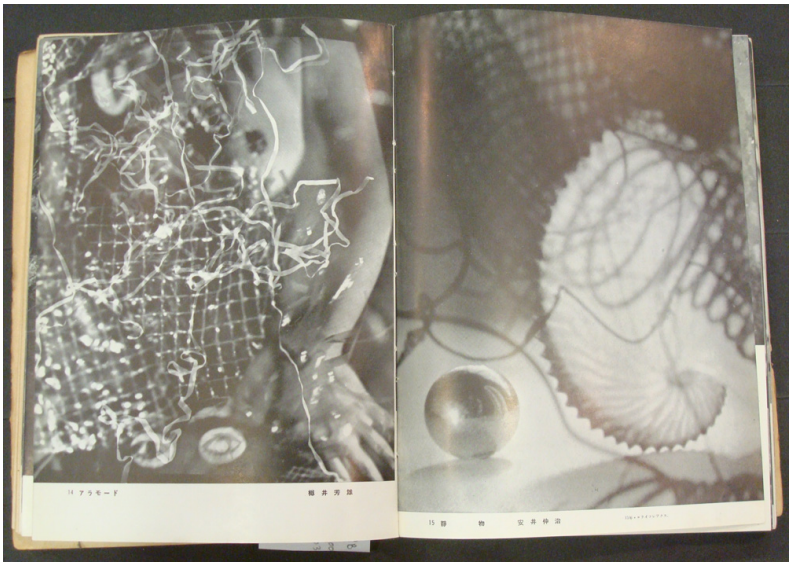

Figure 4.14: Tarui Yoshio, *À la mode* and Yasui Nakaji, *Still Life*, *Ars Shashin Nenkan*, 1938, detail.

Specific elements of Tarui's image can be identified and read against related practices by both Yasui and Koishi. In the first case, Tarui's use of a wired construction to indicate body substitution or a means for achieving a two-way mirror effect is established in two photographs published in 1938 for the *Ars Shashin Nenkan* (*Ars Photographic Annual*), a publication of the best-achieved photographic works around the country that was issued annually by the company *Ars*. Tarui's photograph featured in this volume shows a nude female torso behind a surface composed from a distorted wire and is titled *À la mode* (*Aramōdo*), whereas Yasui's *Still Life* (*Seibutsu*) appears on the opposite page and shows a similar wired surface in the foreground (Figure 4.14). In the latter case, two objects seen behind the wire, a metal ball and a seashell, can be considered as substituting the body seen in Tarui's image by displacement of objects, in a standard approach to staged photography explored by the artist at the time.[86] The importance of this reference for the later *Genealogy* is in its incorporating of sexuality as a means of transgressing

[85] Ibid, p. 23.
[86] For another example of Yasui's practice in terms of the specific use of wire see a photograph titled *Spring* (*Haru*), as per: *Kamera Kurabu* (1939). Vol. 4, No. 4, unpaginated.

the surface of the wire-mirror. Although Hanawa's *Complex Imagination* would also experiment with the use of eroticism towards the same end, the surface is now seen as distorted and collapses into the interiority of the image in both photographs. Foucault described the potential of sexuality for delivery of transgression when it is understood as a fissure, 'one which marks the limit within us and designates us as a limit'.[87] The use of a nude torso so as to suggest the transgressive nature of the photograph and stepping beyond the limits of spatial and temporal divisions is enhanced with the collapsing wire, affirming how the space of transgression is situated in the very line that it crosses.[88] As Foucault explained, such an action does not transform the 'other side' of the mirror but pushes to the limits the line of separation in a type of 'nonpositive affirmation' or contestation of borders and limits.[89]

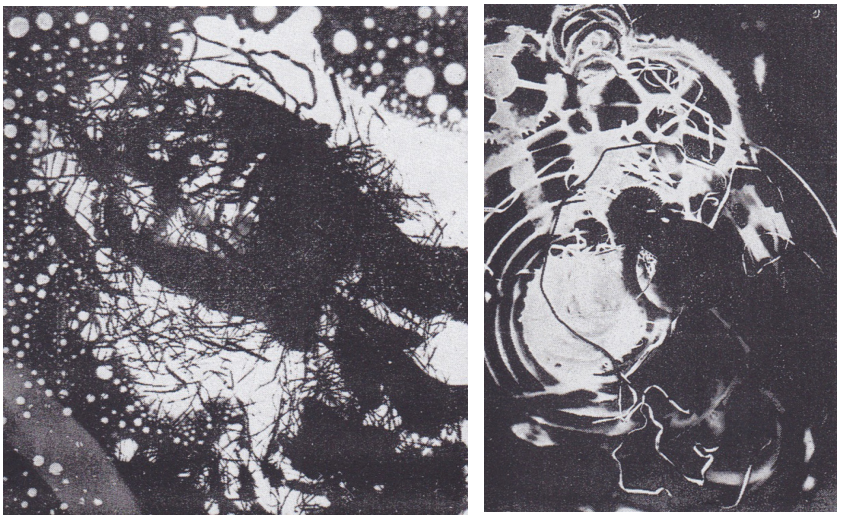

Figure 4.15: Tarui Yoshio, *Imaging Releasing the Bride*, 1937.

Figure 4.16: Tarui Yoshio, *A Group of Discontinuity Taking Place in Work 99,* 1937.

Tarui's use of the wire and the disassembled clock motifs in the *Genealogy of Inscription* can also be traced back in two images he produced for the Naniwa exhibition in the previous year. The exhibition travelled to Tokyo and a part of the photographs shown were reprinted in a report from a talk organised on the

[87] Foucault, Michel ([1963] 1977). A Preface to Transgression. In: Bouchard, Donald F (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p. 30.
[88] For how transgression is 'an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flesh of its passage' see: Ibid, p. 33
[89] For the use of the phrase 'other side of the mirror' see: Ibid, p. 35.

occasion in the September 1937 issue of the *Kamera* (*Camera*).[90] Two Tarui's photographs, *Imaging Releasing the Bride* (*Hōtaretaru hanayome no zōei*) and *A Group of Discontinuity Taking Place in Work 99* (*Sakuhin 99 ni okeru renzokusezaru hitomure*) that were shown (and reprinted) drew attention in terms of their ambiguous titles (Figure 4.15).[91] Seemingly formless and ambiguous, they are abstracted prints incorporating a manipulated process of the negative. The potential to read the *Imaging* as another rendition of the later use of a collapsed grid as a method to transgress the separation between two sides of the mirror-surface, however, emerges this time from the relation to another collage seen at the same show, produced by Koishi and titled *Bride* (*Hanayome*) (Figure 4.16).

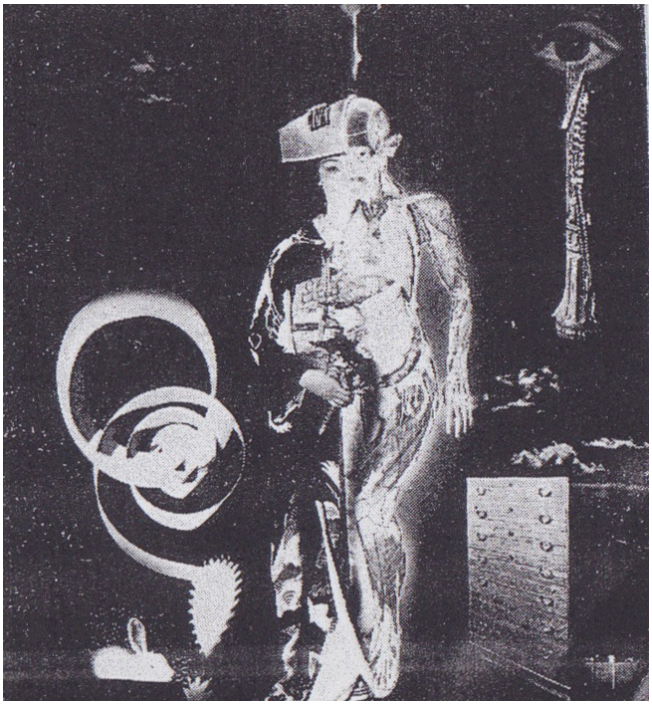

Figure 4.17: Koishi Kiyoshi, *Bride*, 1937.

Koishi's *Bride* features another complex arrangement of objects so as to depict a mirror image. Half of a model wearing a traditional Japanese bride dress is juxtaposed with a robotic figure, the chief character of Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927), whereas a chest of drawers, symbolising the bride's

[90] Naniwa shashin kurabu tōkyō ten zandankai [Symposium on the Occasion of the Naniwa Photo Club Tokyo Exhibition] (1937). *Kamera*, September Edition, pp. 292-297.
[91] Ibid, p. 294.

dowry is contrasted with a spiralled wire on the opposite side. Several elements further complicate the image. A white rabbit in the bottom left indicates Carroll's story *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and is juxtaposed with a magnified view of the chest achieved against the clouds seen behind it. Such reversal of scales would refer to Carroll's story for the fact that the character of Alice would change sizes in different realities described in the narrative. Finally, an elongated object released from the eye seen in the upper right would represent a beauty revealed in strange juxtapositions. In *Bride*, a multiple visual puzzle of classic Surrealist motifs, contrasted elements of the image also indicate an explicit temporal reading. A traditionally-dressed Japanese bride from the title stands to represent the past, whereas Lang's character indicates the future. The line of separation is firmly set, so as to offer a praxis against which different elements of the image relate to each other. In Tarui's rendition of the image, referenced through the title, the line of separation is lost in a seemingly formless composition, but becomes clearer when the image is viewed as a superimposition of several layers, similar to Hanawa's *Complex Imagination*. *Imaging Releasing the Bride* thus suggests how a roentgen or an inside-out view of the bride is the means of setting it (or Koishi's representation of her) free, with different spaces and temporalities of Koishi's *Bride* merging in a single construction. The abstracted shape of the body and the wire-grid, iconographical elements that Yasui is using to achieve the effect of a simulated X-ray photograph, also evoke a type of image production already rendered recognisable in Ei-Kyū's *Reason for Sleep* and possibly reference his work as well.

Against such a background, Tarui's *Genealogy of Inscription*, showing a similar use of wire as collapsing the border line (between different sides of the mirror, waking and dreaming states, sexes or temporalities) as suggested in his accompanying poem, thus invites the viewer to step beyond the reasonable mind and imagine a nude body suggested in the abstracted shape integrated with the wired construction as placed beyond a singular spatiality or temporality. That such an imagination would require an unreasonable mind is finally suggested by the inclusion of a disassembled clock, as featured in *A Group of Discontinuity*. 'Discontinuity' from the title is suggested in this image

not only by the various parts and bolts of the clock but also in a spiral shape with which they are integrated, and that again stands for the line of transgression.[92]

Figure 4.18: Yoshihara Jirō, *Hand, Legs and Desk Lamp – Clock*, 1937-1940.

Symbolical use of the clock to suggest a critique of the reasonable mind was a well-known motif inherited in Surrealism from Dada.[93] It was frequently deployed by various photographers, including the well-known 'new' photography practitioners such as Matsubara, but is also seen in Yoshihara Jirō's *Hands, Legs and Desk Lamp – Clock* (Figure 4.17). The founder of a well-known postwar collective *Gutai*, Yoshihara was involved with the Room Nine Society (*Kyūshitsu-kai*) in the second part of the 1930s and this image attests to his interest in Surrealist collage. It shows a body constructed by pasting together cut outs of a lamp, legs and a hand with a formless torso rendered in a brown colour and attached to a photograph of a mountainscape.

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[92] For how the relationship between the limit and transgression is illustrated in a form of a spiral see Foucault, Michel ([1963] 1977), p. 35.
[93] Francis Picabia's *Alarm Clock 1*, published on the cover page of the *Dada* journal No. 4-5 in May 1919 would be an example of this relation.

The temporal tension stressed in the motif of the clock, towards which the hand of the figure is reaching, is achieved in rendering of the background, the moon and the sea, in traditional Japanese style drawing. This image also features several superimposed layers, including a brown background on top of which a drawing is laid and on which the photographic elements are finally arranged. In a tension with each other, they stand for a modernist preoccupation with progress (between the past of the drawing and the future towards which the hand reaches), whilst the fragmented experience of the historical time is suggested by a disjointed view of the body. In view of the predominant political atmosphere after 1937, the collage thus points out the essential importance of time in the intellectual climate of the day. It is only by abolishing the progressive view of time suggested in the symbolism of a disassembled clock that *Bride* can be 'released' and that an imagined nude body behind the wire in *Genealogy* can appear. In Yoshihara's rendering of the temporal tension, the progressivist gesture of the composite body is ridiculed in the formless composition and colouring of the 'torso' as indicating excrement. Also, the movement in which the body reaches towards the clock puts it in a position of danger of collapsing from the mountain into the sea.

The concern with temporality thus dominates in a large body of work produced as photo-collages among various Surrealist practitioners around the country. It connects Yamamoto's and Yamanaka's work in Nagoya with Nagata's interests in Tokyo, the production of Tarui, Hanawa and Koishi in Osaka with that of Matsubara and Yoshihara in Ashiya. The tension can be summarised in the chest of drawers seen in Koishi's *Bride*, as it indicates what a Czech-born cultural theorist Vilém Flusser described as a disinheritance of the twentieth century faced with the technological promise of the future.[94] Thus all these photographers and artists propose to renegotiate the tension through transgressing the progressivist, linear view of time and folding of different temporal dimensions, thus rupturing its coherence and unity. The revolutionary potential of the Surrealist experience in such temporal terms had been recognized by Walter Benjamin as early as in 1929, and was

[94] Flusser, Vilém ([1987] 2002). *Writings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 138.

described as 'the substitution of a political for a historical view of past'.[95] It is primarily a type of anachronism, an eruption of the past in the present by the use of the 'outmoded' that fuels the revolutionary energies of the Surrealists.[96] In his study on the politics of time within modernity, Peter Osborne writes in this regard:

> This is the phrase which, in the context of the attempt to read Surrealist experience simultaneously as political experience and as an historically specific form of cultural experience, redefines political experience *as* historical experience, historical experience (in its full metaphysical sense) as 'political'. The site of this experience is the refiguration of the everyday through interruption.[97]

For Benjamin, the refiguration of the present, and thus its opening to the future, arrives from the anachronic treatment of the past.[98] However, as David Cunningham has noted in his reading of the French philosopher Maurice Blanchot's essay on Surrealism 'Tomorrow at Stake' (1967), it is equally a Surrealist understanding of the future that allows it such interruption.[99] In other words, an open and undetermined view of the future that the Surrealist insistence on chance would require, the future *as* unknown, in Cunningham's terms, opens the possibility of interrupting the everyday from that perspective as well.[100] Whereas the references to past in Surrealist practices in Japan could still be confused as occupying the same temporal dimension to those of the romantics, claiming it is an idealised space outside of modernity, its critical distance is achieved in an equal interruption of the present by the future, offered in pushing to the limits the line of division, or the surface of a two-way

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[95] Benjamin, Walter ([1929] 1979). *One Way Street and Other Writings*. London: NLB, p. 230.
[96] For how the 'outmoded' is described as 'the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them' see: Ibid, p. 229. For the relationship between this text and Surrealist photography, and particularly for its use in Breton's novel *Nadja*, see: Bate, David (2003). *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, p.100.
[97] Osborne, Peter (1995). *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. New York, London: Verso, p. 185.
[98] I am grateful to George Tomlinson for his comments integrated in this discussion.
[99] Cunningham, David (2003). A Question of Tomorrow: Blanchot, Surrealism and the Time of the Fragment. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 1, pp. 1-17 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal1/acrobat_files/Cunningham.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[100] Ibid, pp. 10-11.

mirror, in the present. To what Haratoonian described as a substitution of the present with the past in the nationalist program of the 'national body', they are offering a modernist present already 'interrupted' by the unknown future.[101]

Transgressing the limits

A shared interest in the use of photo-collage to offer alternative modes of photographic representation would also blur the borderline between the photographic and the artistic Surrealist practices in the decade. The same interest for transgressing the limitations of representation expressed among Surrealist photographers around the country can also be identified within the purely artistic circles, as in the cases of Yamanaka and Yoshihara. Another significant example is that of Hashimoto Tetsurō's works, as seen in the second volume of the *Room Nine* (*Kyūshitsu*) magazine in 1940. The Room Nine Society was established in 1939 with the support of Leonard Fujita and Seiji Tōgo, two prominent Japanese Surrealist painters. In the first issue of its magazine, the group established itself as a faction of 'specially selected painters for their modern and progressive tendencies' from the participants to the annual exhibition of the Second Division Society, and called for correspondence in Japanese, German, English and French.[102] An article in the *Mai Yū* (*Every Evening*) newspaper, reporting on their first exhibition in May 1939, identified the group as Surrealist. The report was titled 'The First Exhibition of the Room Nine Society' but the subtitle reads 'Surrealist Group of Artists from the Second Division Society', thus identifying the 'modern and progressive tendencies' indicated in the group's letter as primarily Surrealist.[103] The report noted how both Fujita and Seiji exhibited works in the exhibition and listed a number of the ninety works shown, including 'deeply

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[101] Ibid, p. 13.
[102] *Kyūshitsu* (1939). Vol. 1, pp. 35-36. All documents related to the Room Nine Society, including news clippings and exhibition catalogue lists were accessed at the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo.
[103] Kyūshitsu-kai dai ikkai ten [The First Exhibition of the Room Nine Society] (1939). *Mai Yū*, May 13. The exhibition was on view at the Shirokiya Gallery in Nihonbashi area in Tokyo.

impressive' (*inshō fukai*) *Photo C* (*Foto C*) produced by Hashimoto and a photograph titled *Fantasy* (*Gensō*) by Yoshihara.[104]

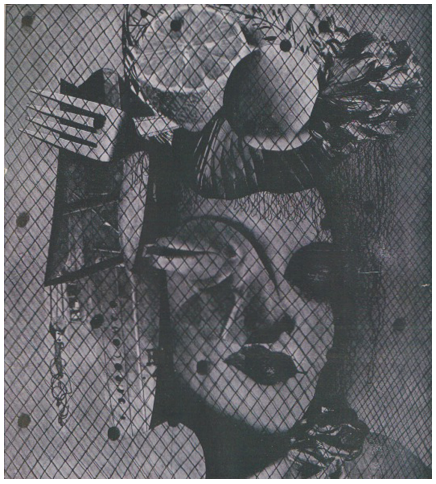

Figure 4.19: Hashimoto Tetsurō, *Untitled*, *Kyūshitsu*, March 1940, detail.

Figure 4.20: Hashimoto Tetsurō, *Photo-Collage (Cosmetics)*, *Kyūshitsu*, March 1940, detail.

It was the second volume of the magazine that included two of the 'deeply impressive' collages by Hashimoto, most probably selected from among his entries to the second exhibition, taking place at the Mitsukoshi department store in Ginza, between March 5-10 in 1940.[105] One appears on the cover and is untitled (Figure 4.18) whereas the other is seen within the volume and is captioned as *Photo-Collage (Cosmetics)* (*Foto-korāju (Shifun)*) (Figure 4.19). They both offer complex arrangements of objects that appear coherent regardless of their composite nature. Also, they feature a distinct application of a mirror motif suggested in a distorted wire. On the cover page, the wire is

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[104] A catalogue list of the exhibition includes five works by Hashimoto, all titled as *Foto* (*Photo*) (*A,B,C,D* and *E*) and two images by Yoshihara titled as *Work* (*Sakuhin*) and accompanied with Japanese lettering (*I* and *Ro*), as per: Dai ikkai Kyūshitsu-kai tenrankai shuppin mokuroku [Exhibition Catalogue of the First Exhibition of the Room Nine Society] (1939). These works attest to the fact that photography was practised and exhibited as a Surrealist art form by the members of this group.

[105] *Kyūshitsu* (1940). Vol. 2, unpaginated. The magazine also includes a sample of Yoshihara's *Work*. The magazine was printed on March 1 and therefore possibly included a preview of some of the works exhibited in the show, held in the same month. A catalogue list of the second exhibition includes another five works by Hashimoto, all titled as *Photo-Collage* (*Foto korāju*, *A, B, C, D* and *E*) and three entries by Yoshihara, titled again as *Work* and this time accompanied by lettering in Roman alphabet (as *A, B* and *C*), as per: Dai ni kai Kyūshitsu-kai tenrankai shuppin mokuroku [Exhibition Catalogue of the Second Exhibition of the Room Nine Society] (1940). Both catalogue lists indicate a larger and coherent body of work produced in photo-collage and photography by both Hashimoto and Yoshihara.

integrated as a part of the image and is possibly rendered in drawing, covering its certain elements while enwrapping and intertwining with others. It completely integrates with the interiority of the image, suggesting a spider web that entraps all its elements into a formless coalescence. In *Cosmetics*, the wire forms an interface for the image, and is placed in front of a collage showing a female head while again intertwining with the composition of varied objects substituting a hat. Another layer in *Cosmetics* is this time offered in the assembled rendition of the face, as we see a collaged dolphin substituting for the right eye of the face. The eye is thus used as another reflecting surface, operating on the premise of an immanent two-war mirror, based on its ability to both reflect the world and project subjectivity. Foucault describes this function of the eye, both as a 'mirror' and a 'lamp', as 'the figure of being in the act of transgressing its own limit'.[106] As the final progression from the actual mirror, through the grid and a wire construction, the eye thus offers the means of completing the process of pushing to the limits a border line separating the interior and the exterior, the inner and the outer reality, on the level of the body, this time also introducing a division between the human and the animal. Hashimoto's practice exemplifies the level onto which the production of photo-collages would progress throughout the decade in the Surrealist art circles, and indicates the establishment of photography as an independent art form, taking place in 1939. Widely embraced by a number of artists in the decade, the line of separation between photography and art would also be continuously renegotiated by a number of different Surrealist practitioners.[107]

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[106] Foucault, Michel ([1963] 1977), p. 45.

[107] For how the problem of photography's understanding as an independent art practice can be interpreted in terms of a non-existing market for the medium and thus resulting in the separation between the art and photography 'worlds' in 1920s Japan and for how blurring of distinctions between art and photography in the 1930s started taking place in application of photo-collages and especially among the artists interested in Surrealism see: Mitsuda Yuri (2009). Shōwa zenki no bijutsukai to shashin sakuhin [Art World and Photographic Works in the Early Part of Shōwa]. In: Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo [Tokyo Research Institute for Cultural Assets] (ed.), *Shōwaki bijutsu tenrankai no kenkyū: Senzenhen* [Research into Art Exhibitions in Shōwa Era, Prewar Period]. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, p. 382.

Figure 4.21: Ei-Kyū, *Real*, 1937.

The most prominent art magazine of the time *Mizue* featured a considerably small number of photographs throughout 1937 and 1938.[108] In the August 1937 issue, however, it included a photo-collage produced by Ei-Kyū and submitted to the first exhibition of a newly formed Free Artists' Association under a title *Real* (*Rearu*) (Figure 4.18).[109] As much as Ei-Kyū's inclusion in the June edition of the *Atelier* would mark a culmination of his work as a photographer, the appearance in the exhibition and in the volume of the *Mizue* would mark a significant stepping out of the photographic context and a stronger inclination towards the art world. The exhibition was a rare occasion to view works in photo-collage alongside more established art forms at the time but Ei-Kyū would not attend the opening, nor would he travel to Tokyo to

[108] At the time, the magazine was focused on providing commentary to the annual art exhibitions and the recent developments in art practices in the country but also aimed to introduce non-Japanese art to Japanese audiences, with extensive features on both established 'masters' of Western painting such as Rubens, Goya and Van Gogh and modernist painters such as Cezanne, Gauguin and Chagall.

[109] For how the image was accompanied with three other abstract artworks and not presented as related to photography see: *Mizue* (1937). No. 390, unpaginated. For the only two features focused on photography in the following year see: Hasegawa Saburō (1938). Pikaso no kōga to aru bijutsu shashin [Picasso's Pictures of Light and Certain Art Photography]. *Mizue*, No. 398, pp. 315-320. See also: Yamanaka Chirū (1938). Man Rei no jinbutsu shashin [Man Ray's Portraits]. *Mizue*, No. 406, pp. 547-553.

see the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*. He would remain in his native Miyazaki throughout the year, drawing back from public life in a period of depression and illness.[110] The state of mind would already be implied in his 'On Reality', an article from which the new work would take its title, in which he severely criticised the art world as enclosed and corrupted. His dissatisfaction with a growing burden on expression by the general state of affairs in the country was also expressed in his private correspondence.[111] As in the following year the condition would drive him to burn and destroy his works and shift the focus towards abstract painting, the full scope of his collage production through 1939 will never receive a focused public presentation as in the case of the *Reason for Sleep*.[112]

Real features a fragmented and deformed male torso and includes a superimposed image of a fish tail substituting the head and reflecting back on the surface of the body in a shadow, resembling another view of a dolphin. Such use of the elements of the collage indicates another interest into the inside-out folding of the interior and the exterior, the human and the animal, and a process of metamorphosis on the level of the face.

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[110] For how Yamada took Ei-Kyū's submission to the exhibition as the artist changed his mind in the last minute see: Yamada Kōshun (1976). *Ei-Kyū: Hyōden to sakuhin* [Ei-Kyū: Critical Biography and Artworks]. Japan: Seiryūdō, p. 161. For how the categories of photo-collage, photomontage and photo-plasticism included in the exhibition were specific to this art group at the time see: Ibid. p. 162.

[111] In a letter addressed to Yamada on May 7, 1937 Ei-Kyū asserted how: 'No artwork can exist outside of a thought that is burdened with reality and the state of affairs in Japan', as per: Ibid, p. 156.

[112] Ibid. pp. 176-177. This condition remains until the present day. The relevance of bringing forward this body of work has been confirmed in an interview by the author with Taniguchi Eri, a specialist in the area of Japanese Modern Art and researcher at the National Art Centre Tokyo, on May 15, 2013.

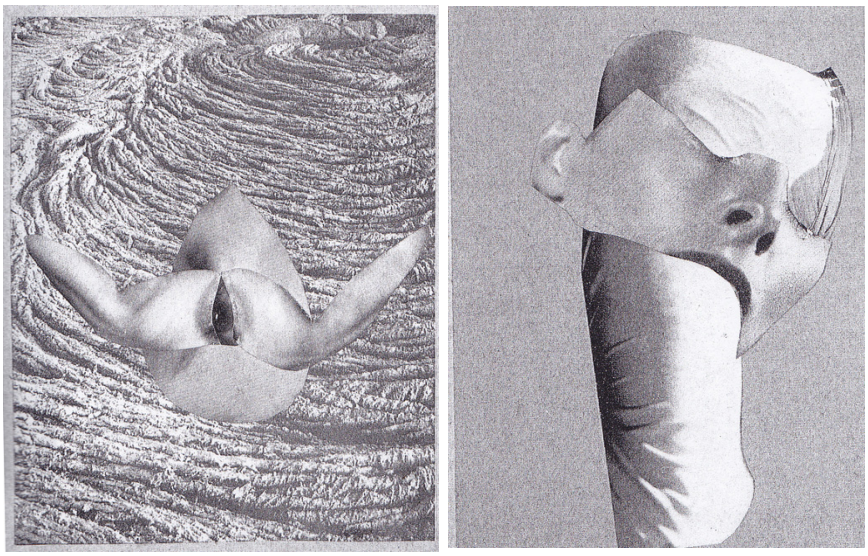

Figure 4.212: Ei-Kyū, *An Eye*, 1937.

Figure 4.23: Ei-Kyū, *Suffering Face*, 1937.

The use of dislocated body parts in Ei-Kyū's collages transcends the application of single motifs but it can be seen as particularly interested in representation of the face and the head as the sites of artistic intervention. Displacement of the face is achieved either through dislocation of the (mirror) eye or through its complete disfiguration. For instance, it is seen dislocated in *Eye* (1937), placed in a centre of a bodily composite in insinuation of female genitals against an image of waves (Figure 4.21). In *Suffering Face*, however, the entire face is ruptured and disfigured and appears as a mask-like residue covering partially the object that enters it through the site of the mouth (Figure 4.22). Whereas such use of the body parts might indicate primarily a release of erotic desire, sexuality is, again, only used as an effective tool within a larger transgressive project. Using photographs sourced from magazines, the collages would primarily indicate a loss of a singular and recognisable identity.[113]

[113] Ei-Kyū (et al.) (1997). *Fossilization, Imprinted Light: Ei-Kyū and Photogram Images* (Exh. Cat.). Saitama Ken, Urawa Shi: Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, p. 100.

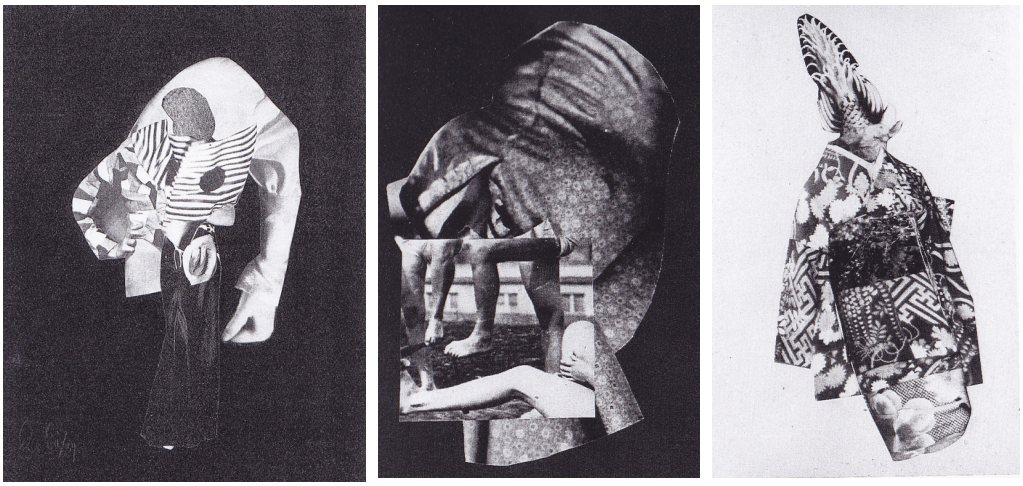

Figure 4.24: Ei-Kyū, *Big Hand*, 1937.

Figure 4.25: Ei-Kyū, *Work V*, 1937.

Figure 4.26: Ei-Kyū, *Work III*, 1939.

It is not only *Real* that shows a male body as equally deformed and transformed but also *Big Hand* (Figure 4.23). The focus in this collage moves away from the face onto displacement of the head, seen carried under an arm of the figure. The head is also displaced by substitution, as in *Work V*, in which we see a photograph of male legs on the position of the head of an upside-down view of a female torso (Figure 4.24). The head would also be substituted with a plant, as in *Work III*, where it is seen figuring in a traditional *kimono* dress (Figure 4.25). As Gilles Deleuze has pointed out, there is a great difference between the representation of a face and a head in relation to the body.[114] Whereas the head is an integral part of the body, which can be reduced to it, the face is a 'structured, spatial organisation' that conceals it.[115] Although no motif is fixed in a singular meaning, the relations between the body, the head and the face are of primary interest to Ei-Kyū. The critical position that such an interest would assume against the notion of the 'national body', or a prevailing interest to dismantle the face would, in Deleuze's terms, reveal an intention to 'rediscover the head or make it emerge from beneath

[114] Deleuze, Gilles ([1981] 2004). *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 20.
[115] Ibid.

the face'.[116] Such an attempt would aim to provide a multiple and unfixed image of the face for the 'head of the state' rendered in degrading terms either as a plant, or an image, or even kept under an arm. Insistence on re-inscribing a potential into a face would thus depart from the symbolical relationship of the head and the body as featured in a decapitated image of Leondardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1490) and produced by André Masson for the cover of the *Acéphale* (1936-1939), a magazine published by a dissident Surrealist Georges Bataille, but would remain close to it. In other words, pointing to an abandonment of any concept of leadership, it would also signal a decentering of focus and insistence on collective and multiple identities.[117]

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[116] Deleuze, Gilles ([1981] 2004), pp. 20-21. For how for Félix Guattari, accredited by Deleuze for the development of some of the parts of this text, 'there are certain heads that do not pass in the system. It is necessary to hide them, cut them off, make them over, or better yet transform them from the inside' see: Guattari, Félix ([1979] 2011). *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e); Cambridge, Mass.: Distributed by the MIT Press, p. 79.

[117] *Acéphale* was a magazine launched by Bataille after the break of *Contre-Attaque* in 1936. For how Bataille was completely against representation of revolutionary politics and thus the image is the only visual reference to this magazine see: Baker, Simon (2006). *Psychologies des Foules*: Surrealism and the Impossible Object. In: Taylor, Brandon (ed.), *Sculpture and Psychoanalysis*. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, pp. 37-41. For Bataille's view of how the *organic* crowd is the only means of the effective politics and how its visual regime was to be offered in 'fraying or defraying of focus, away from the centre, away from the point of interest, toward and back to the crowd itself, back to the collective point of recognition' see: Ibid. For a further discussion on revolutionary politics in Surrealism in relation to the *Contre-Attaque* see the following Chapter 5. For how Ei-Kyū only befriended Shimozato and Sakata, another two artists who might had an interest in Bataille's writing, on a visit to the third exhibition of the Free Artists Association in 1939, by which point he already abandoned photography as a means of expression, see: Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 114.

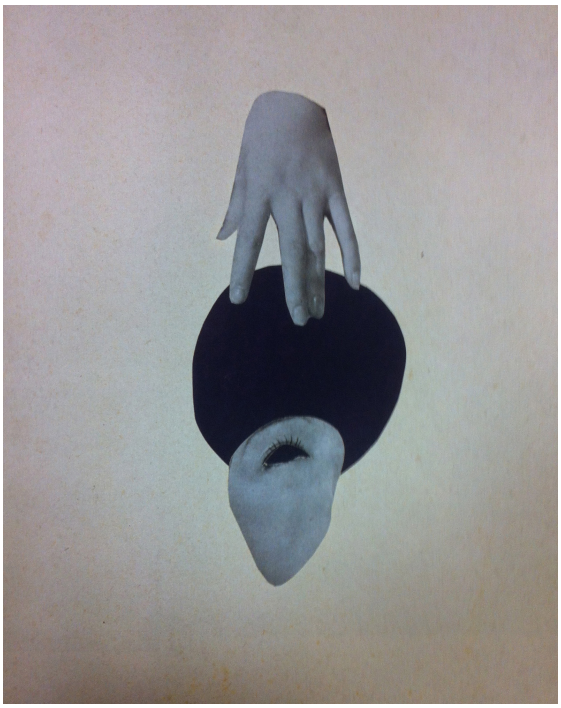

Figure 4.27: Ei-Kyū, *Collage*, 1937.

The interest in multiple identities would be interrelated to offering the views of an inside-out folding of the body, as seen in *Real*, and is also evidenced in *Collage* (Figure 4.26). In this composition, a hollowed out view of the eye is contrasted with a dislocated hand, and they are both seen on the opposite sides of a black hole, a two-way mirror allowing continuous transgression from within (the hollowed eye) into an objectified self (of the hand) and abandonment of any stable spatial or temporal reference point in portraying the relationship between the body, the head and the face. Both such interests, in subverting fixed representation of identity by disfiguring and refiguring bodily parts as well as in collapsing of spatio-temporal coherence of the photographic print by producing folded images of interiority and exteriority operating through different translucent surfaces, were shared among varied Surrealist practitioners in the decade. Regardless of the many disagreements and differences formulating among the main amateur photo-clubs in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, they shared the same preoccupation in the use of photo-collage. Such a shared interest was also complemented by collaborative works produced between artists and photographers or in relation with a wider network of Surrealist artists. Although acknowledging their respective

positions, they can thus be put in relation to each other, as formulating a 'collective assemblage' of their minor history, one abandoning any stability and centrality as in Ei-Kyū's collages. This assemblage would be constructed from members of different amateur clubs in the country, from individual artists shifting their main focus of interest and belonging to various collectives and would also indicate an existence of much closer links among disparate practitioners than the formal absence of a single Surrealist group would suggest. As the collectivity suggested in the 'collective assemblage' of the minor contains the notion of *agencement*, the term refers to an organisational process rather than a static quality.[118] Translated in English as 'assemblage', it suggests a more flexible organisation than a static connection between its different parts. It affirms 'fittings, fixtures and diverse arrangements', which all play their significant roles in helping the assemblage to remain active and 'current'.[119] Therefore, a minor history of Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s should equally be seen as based on a multiplicity of individual practices as well as on various relations forged between them. The ability to stay 'current' or shift and bend with regard to any major discourse is what constitutes its primary value, abolishing any idea of a static and singular identity.

In their 1975 work on Kafka, Deleuze and Félix Guattari articulated an assemblage as two-sided: on a subjective level it is 'a machinic assemblage of desire' and on the level of community it is 'a collective assemblage of enunciation'.[120] They are viewed as interconnected, due to the fact that a specific position of a minor artist does not only result in isolation from societal and political structures but also in inclusion to a minor collective, helping in return renegotiation of those socio-political structures that initiate the process, in transcendence of individuality. The concern of Kafka's work, and therefore

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[118] Stivale, Charles J. (2005). *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, p. 77 and p. 114.
[119] Phillips, John (2006). Agencement / Assemblage. *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 23, p. 109.
[120] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix ([1975] 1986). *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 81. Unfixed character of identity on the level of subjectivity would be indicated by the use of the word 'machinic'. For how ''machinism' of the assemblage will only recognize relative identities and trajectories' see: Guattari, Félix ([1979] 2011), p. 11.

of minor literature, is primarily a formulation of new assemblages in a process of constant renegotiation and transformation. Thus if the 'collective assemblage' is understood as a relation between individuals in constant flux aiming to remain 'current', the term becomes a discursive reflection on the problem of community.[121] As it has been pointed out many times, the proposal of minor literature for overcoming the inability of a stable community is that its people are 'missing'.[122] As Nicholas Thoburn has argued, this condition opens up a possibility of specific authorship, as a model in which an author embodies and represents conditions of a specific group identity dies out with the idea that no such singular collective can be identified in the case of a minor construction, and indeed history.[123] Such a formulation of community without a fixed identity essentially assigns agency to dispersion and can thus be traced back in the writing of Deleuze and Guattari to Foucault, or even identified within the political preferences of dissident Surrealists.[124] A composition of individual voices that constitutes the minor history of Surrealist photography in Japan of the 1930s should not be seen as simply failing to form a single group but as remaining in a state of continuous potential for transformation, of not only itself and major practices of photography but those socio-political structures that contain them. This transformation is aimed at formulating a possibility for construction of new assemblages – of different spatial and temporal dimensions, but also of power relations invested into configurations of what can be said, or made visible in an image.

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[121] For a summary of how different critical voices have suggested alternative notions of community, such as the 'unavowable' (for Maurice Blanchot), 'inoperative' (for Jean-Luc Nancy) and 'coming' (for Giorgio Agamben) see: Raunig, Gerald (2010). *A Thousand Machines*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), p. 94.

[122] Thoburn, Nicholas (2003). *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. London; New York: Routledge, p. 30.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Deleuze and Guattari accredit the development of their idea how deterritorialisation functions in language to Foucault, as per: Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix ([1975] 1986), Note 20, p. 24. For how Deleuze affirms Foucault's use of dispersion as synonymous with heterogeneity see: Deleuze, Gilles ([1986] 2006). *Foucault*. London: Continuum, p. 7. For Bataille's preference of the *organic* crowd see Note 115 to this Chapter.

Chapter 5

Focusing on nature: Landscapes of destruction and desire

Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde is considered to have achieved the most coherent and sustained production of Surrealist photography in the 1930s, partly due to now well-recognised and established work by Yamamoto Kansuke. However, Yamamoto did not take part in a collaborative project on the *Mesemb Genus* album (1940) carried out by the other photographers of the club in the first part of 1939. On the other hand, Shimozato Yoshio developed an approach to the practice that not only mobilised Sakata Minoru, Tajima Tsugio and Inagaki Taizō, but also attempted to transcend an impasse enforced on Surrealism by the depoliticisation of culture in 'Neo-Surrealism', a framework that was aimed to motivate the new generation of Surrealist artists. Also, Sakata's active relations with both the Naniwa club and Fukuoka's *Société Irf* through to 1940 would seek ways to forge closer relations between different photo clubs. The following chapters will focus on the practices of Shimozato and Sakata so as to examine more closely their impact in the assemblage of a minor history of Surrealist photography in the decade, while also addressing Yamamoto's work within such a context.

Within the artificial framework of the photographic 'avant-garde', the chief interaction in the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium remained between the clubs in Osaka and Tokyo. However, the club in Nagoya offered an alternative reading of the notion through a clear establishment of the Surrealist object as the chief subject of interest in December 1938. This chapter will analyse this interest against the relevant texts published on the Surrealist object by Shimozato and Yamanaka Chirū as well as a text establishing the relation between the Surrealist object and photography by Takiguchi Shūzō. Following on from the previous arguments, it will reveal a deliberate focus of Surrealist photographers in both Nagoya and Tokyo that was aimed at awakening an active spectatorship as a means of forming a bond in the domain of aesthetics, as a dematerialised but the only remaining field of politically effective action at the time.

Impossibility of revolution

In the opening paragraph of 'The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment' (1932), Salvador Dalí takes his point of departure from the title of Max Ernst's painting *Pietà, Revolution by Night* (1923) ascribing it with significance for the Surrealist experiments with objects, carried out in a distinct scientific manner. He claims that the word 'revolution' sums up the Surrealist future and adds that 'the review which for several years recorded the experiments should have been called *La Révolution surréaliste* must be significant'.[1] Takiguchi Shūzō translated the article in Japanese, published originally in English in *This Quarter* in September 1932, for the March 1935 issue of the *Shihō* (*Poetic Method*).[2] In a short submission to the *Cahiers d'art* in 1935 and titled 'In Japan', Takiguchi affirmed how the recent translations of Surrealist texts, such as André Breton's *Surrealism and Painting*, Louis Aragon's *In Defiance of Painting* and Dalí's essays, offered an opportunity for the young poets and artists in Japan to encounter and study Surrealism, in a country where romantics, 'hairs and conservators of Naturalism', were considered feudal lords of the world of literature.[3] For Takiguchi, the encounter with Surrealism in Japan entailed great difficulty, as reactionary elements in the country strongly opposed revolutionary literature, censoring the use of the word 'revolution'.[4] To him, the result was comical to an extent, as the blank spaces appearing in different texts would almost always stand for this word.[5]

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[1] Dalí, Salvador (1998). *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*. Translated and Edited by Haim Finkelstein. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 234-235.
[2] Dalí, Salvador ([1933] 1991). Shuruearisumu jikken ni okowareta taishō [The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment]. Translated by Takiguchi Shūzō. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Senzen senchū hen I: 1926-1936* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 11, Prewar and War Period 1, 1926-1936]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 415-425.
[3] Takiguchi Shūzō (1935). Au Japon. *Cahiers d'art*, No. 7-10, p. 132. For how Takiguchi describes the rich poetic tradition of *haikai* and *waka* verse as petrified in its purist form because Japanese poetry still lives in a 'feudal castle' see: Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

Not long afterwards, a defining moment establishing the Surrealist object experiments as the main focus of the Surrealist research would follow in the year after Breton's visit to Prague in the *Surrealist Exhibition of Objects* held in 1936 in Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris. A special issue of the magazine *Cahiers d'art* accompanied the exhibition, including a reprint of Breton's address to the Prague group and titled 'Surrealist Situation of the Object'.[6] Although mostly ignored by the French press, the exhibition had a significant response in Japanese. In the same year, Yamanka Chirū introduced both the exhibition and the informal catalogue in 'The Problem of the Surrealist Object' published in the *Shin Zōkei* (*New Plasticity*) in September 1936.[7] In the text, the first elaboration of the Surrealist object in the country, the exhibition and the accompanying issue of the *Cahiers d'art* were quoted as examples of the Surrealist experiments with objects, offering several categories in which they could be regarded. Yamanaka established a genealogy of the research from Marcel Duchamp's readymade through to definitions of Breton's 'dream' objects and Dalí's 'symbolical' objects. For the latter two he quoted *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (Volume 3, December 1931) as the source material but avoided the word 'revolution' by replacing it with two 'X' marks.[8] He assigned a great importance to Dalí's 'objects functioning symbolically', translating a large part of his text 'Surrealist Objects' (1931), where those were first defined.[9] He concluded that 'the Surrealist object is located in the space of coordination between an erotic and a poetic meaning'.[10]

His writing on the same subject was further advanced in 'Object Revolution: Position of the Surrealist Object', published in the *Mizue* in February 1937,

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[6] Breton, André ([1936] 1974). *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen Lange. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 255-278.
[7] Yamanaka Chirū ([1936] 1999). Objet surreéaliste no mondai [The Problem of the Surrealist Object]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 349-351.
[8] As: *XX ni hōshi suru shururearisumu*. The two 'X' marks are replacing two ideograms for the word 'revolution' in Japanese, referred to as *kaku-mei*.
[9] Dalí, Salvador ([1931] 1998), pp. 231-234.
[10] Yamanaka Chirū ([1936] 1999), p. 351.

and in which he recognised the earlier text as a prelude.[11] In this article, the word 'revolution' was used both in the title of the article and in the reference to the source material. The 'overall revolution of objects' was, according to Yamanka, contained in Dalí's previously cited 'Surrealist Objects', which he again translated at great length.[12] He also translated parts of Breton's and Duchamp's formerly referenced writings, using his existing research to expand the points which he wished to make, this time strengthening his argument by quoting Friedrich Hegel and Gaston Bachelard's 1936 concept of 'surrationalism' to contextualise the problem.[13] The main difference with the previous text was an in-depth analysis of twelve different artworks, including Breton's *Dream Object* (1935), Dalí's *Aphrodisiac Jacket* (1935-37) and Man Ray's *Mathematical Objects* (1934-1936), together with images produced by Hans Bellmer, Georges Hugnet and Oscar Dominguez and sculptural works made by Alberto Giacometti and Meret Oppenheim.[14]

The problematic word 'revolution' finally reappears in another text by the same author, published in the March 1937 issue of the *Mizue* and focusing on the works by Štyrský and Toyen under a title 'Two Czech Painters'.[15] In this text, Yamanaka established Surrealism in Czechoslovakia as geographically, historically and politically close to the movement in France, exemplifying strong relations between the two groups with visits between Vítêzslav Nezval and Breton to Paris and Prague. He reported on Breton's lecture 'Political Position of Today's Art' given on the occasion of his visit to Prague in 1935. He quoted Breton's reference to C. Day Lewis that for a poet ''Art for art's sake' is as senseless a formula to him as the formula 'Revolution for

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[11] Yamanaka Chirū ([1937] 1999). Buttai no kakumei: obuje shururearisto no ichi [Object Revolution: Position of the Surrealist object]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 388-395.
[12] Ibid, pp. 388-389. For the first part of the text that Yamanaka translated see: Dalí, Salvador ([1931] 1998), pp. 231-232.
[13] Ibid, p. 392.
[14] The images were all featured in the *Cahiers d'art* in 1935 and 1936 editions, with the only exception of Bellmer's work titled as *Composition* (*Konpojishon*) that is not included in these two volumes.
[15] Yamanaka Chirū ([1937(3)] 1999). Chekko ni okeru futari no gakka [Two Czech Painters]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 396-398.

revolution's sake' would be in the eyes of the true revolutionary', indicating that for Breton, Surrealism of the time cannot be considered 'political' in an established sense of the word.[16] In this quotation, he again refrained from directly using the word 'revolution', applying the two 'X' marks. In the same text, Yamanaka also explained the importance of the relationship between Surrealism and politics for the practice of Surrealism in Japan. He writes:

> What we need to pay attention to is the reason why avant-garde politics (*seijiue no zen'ei*) and avant-garde art (*geijutsuue no zen'ei*) cannot be agreed. Surrealism cannot be art of propaganda or agitation. In the last several years, there have been individuals who have converted separately towards the left or the right from the Surrealist camp, and this can be considered as both a weakness of the movement and a fact that establishes its idiosyncrasy. It might be my prejudice to overemphasise this movement's poetic, artistic and experimental outcome but this is a problem that all Japanese Surrealists at this moment should be considerably aware of, taking appropriate action accordingly.[17]

In other words, Yamanka called for all Japanese Surrealists to clearly distinguish proletarian art from Surrealism, as the Surrealist position at that moment remained independent of any direct political action. On the other hand, the constant use and re-use of the word 'revolution', and especially its inclusion in the title of the second article in reference to Dalí's writing, stressed the potential for political action that the Surrealist research of objects offered. The very fact that the word would appear in Takiguchi's translation in 1935 only to become problematic in one magazine in 1936 but not in another one, and then become problematic again in the subsequent issue of that same magazine, signals the working of a loose censorship of politically explicit and potentially subversive content.[18] However, in the light of Takiguchi's earlier comment, it also reveals how the 'revolution by night', as

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[16] Breton, André ([1936] 1974), p. 226. Yamanaka Chirū ([1937(3)] 1999), p. 397.
[17] Yamanaka Chirū ([1937(3)] 1999), p. 397.
[18] The use of the 'hiding characters' (*fuseji*) was an established practice of self-censorship, in which black dots would hide words and phrases anticipated to cause attention from the state censors, as per: Rubin, Jay (1984). *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 29-31. For further discussion about this practice in the 1930s see: Gardner, William O. (1999). *Avant-Garde Literature and the New City: Tokyo 1923-1931*. PhD thesis, Stanford University, p. 23.

described by Dalí, was made impossible in Japanese even in the process of Yamanaka's writing, in which the very word was obscured and coded.

As Michael Stone-Richards has noted, Ernst's *Pietà* was precisely an allusion to complexities entailed in understanding what Surrealist 'revolution' should mean.[19] After the 'Aragon affair' in 1929 and the split between Breton and Louis Aragon in the following two years, the question of what political and politically effective action might involve in the situation where no available model was at hand, Surrealism had moved into the domain of moral scepticism, recognising failure as intrinsic to its attempt to construct a 'new ethics and a new aesthetics'.[20] As much as Dalí's investment in the Surrealist experiments with objects offered a reanimation of the French group's collective experience in these difficult times, the cultural and social conditions that surrounded its evolution since 1931 had completely changed by the point of the 1936 exhibition, and Yamanaka's article.[21] Namely, it is not only that Surrealism had significantly changed from its initial phase in the 1920s through to 1930s but it had also changed in the five years summarised in Yamanaka's text as well. In the same year, the failure of *Contre-Attaque*, a collaborative effort between Georges Bataille and Breton (and including more than fifty other artists and intellectuals) to oppose the offensive political stance of the French Popular Front towards Fascism, would mark a failed Surrealist attempt to directly engage with revolutionary politics, considered to be 'falling back' to art by compromising with a commercial publisher in production of the magazine *Minotaur*e and forming a 'strategic alliance' with the *Cahiers d'art* in 1935 and 1936.[22] As Simon Baker has pointed out, a reaffirmation of the Surrealist object strategy followed the failure of *Contre-Attaque* to produce a sustained logic of the crowd and find a means of strategic political action, but reaffirmed Breton's conviction that representation could play a significant part

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[19] Stone-Richards, Michael (2003). Failure and Community: Preliminary Questions on the Political in the Culture of Surrealism. In: Spiteri, Raymond (ed.), *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, p. 303.
[20] Ibid, pp. 304-305.
[21] Harris, Steven (2004). *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 138.
[22] Ibid, pp. 143-155.

in forming revolutionary subjects.[23] Whereas for Bataille representation was completely disregarded, and photography was considered dangerous for its implied aestheticism, Breton saw in the danger 'not only its redeeming feature, but a feature that could redeem'.[24] In effect, Breton's reaffirmation of the object research was a recognition of how representation could play an effective role in the field of political engagement.[25]

Yamanaka identifies a difficult political position of Surrealism following the failure of *Contre-Attaque* and his call to separate Surrealism from the proletarian art movement in Japan is a recognition that the meaning of the 'political' should be reassessed from the point of view of ethics and aesthetics, in not only the refusal but inability to exercise any form of physical protestation in the country. His genealogy of the Surrealist object, however, also reflects on a tension between Breton's and Dalí's individual theorisations of the Surrealist object. In Dalí's 1932 text the evolution of the experiments with objects and primacy assigned to images in their potential for inducing a change in the real world is contained in the following:

> The years have modified the surrealist concept of the object most instructively, showing, as it were, in images how the surrealist view of the possibilities of action on the external world have been and may still be subject to change. [26]

This tension registers in Yamanaka's 'The Problem of the Surrealist Object', in the final elaboration of the Surrealist object as located in the space of coordination between an erotic and a poetic meaning, designating the first to Dalí. In 'Object Revolution: Position of the Surrealist Object', Yamanaka tacitly sides in the debate with Dalí, whose definition of 'objects functioning symbolically' receives praise for its revolutionary tactics. Finally, he translates the political importance of the recent Surrealist practice to the ongoing

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[23] Baker, Simon (2006). *Psychologies des Foules*: Surrealism and the Impossible Object. In: Taylor, Brandon (ed.), *Sculpture and Psychoanalysis*. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, p. 46.
[24] Ibid, p. 45.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Dalí, Salvador ([1932] 1998), p. 235.

situation in Japan in 'Two Czech Painters', highlighting the urgency to understand political and revolutionary Surrealist tactics in correct terms. The three articles are interconnected and related to each other as they follow the same line of Yamanaka's thought with regard to the recent developments in the 'Surrealist camp'. They appear before the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* (1937) and in magazines catering primarily to art rather than a photography-oriented readership. In such a way, they precede and foresee some of the issues that would become of key importance for the later 'photo avant-garde'. As these articles are written in the period prior to a change of internal politics in Japan following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in July 1937, they would be a result of stable years following the Manchurian Incident. Yamanaka's primary aim to divorce Surrealist politics from proletarian art was meant to induce a motivation for different forms of politically effective action to those already suppressed by conversion of the leftist writers (*tenkō*) in the same period. However, if we recall that in the same period Yamanaka's interest in photography resulted in the dismissal of a straight shot as an effective mediator of Surrealist content, the main forms enabling the production of the (politically effective) Surrealist images were in his opinion photo-collages and photo-objects.

However, a reading of the Surrealist object strategy close to Yamanaka's can also be observed in Shimozato Yoshio's 'Two Themes', another text published in the September 1936 issue of the *Shin Zōkei*.[27] Shimozato also quoted the *Cahiers d'art* as his source of the 'object problem', separating his interest in two subjects: the Surrealist object and paranoia-criticism. He asserted how the Surrealist treatment of objects differed from painting and classical sculpture in that it 'represents a mediator for affirming psychological events' and especially claimed natural and readymade objects as interesting due to the fact that they did not require any intervention on the side of the artist. He writes:

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[27] Shimozato Yoshio ([1936] 2001). Nikko no tēma ni yorite [Two Themes]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 259-260.

> The *thing* itself, such as a bleached root of a tree or a hat hanger, awakes psychological activity in the presenter (such as Ernst or Magnelli) who adopts it and presents it as the 'object' in order to induce a similar psychological effect.[28]

Shimozato's interest in natural objects was exemplified with a photograph of cactus from the Mesemb genus, a subject that he introduced in this article for the first time but that would preoccupy him over the following several years, resulting in a change of focus from painting to photography. With regard to the tension between Breton's and Dalí's understandings of the Surrealist object, he did not see the need to contrast automatism with paranoia-criticism as he understood them to be aimed at achieving the same goal. His explanation, rather, came in comparison to Romanticism, which he defined to be 'a subject of observation' to Surrealism.[29] This comment demonstrates Shimozato's position towards the Romantic School in Japan, which claimed irrationality as a pre-modern characteristic of Japanese thought in order to ground the rising militarist nationalism in aesthetics, and drew a line between their different approaches to reality. Whereas for the Japanese romantics aesthetics was a decadent and dematerialised supplement for an inability to go ahead with any political action, Shimozato understands it as a space and a means opening a possibility of individual intervention in reality.

With regard to Dalí's paranoiac-critical method, on the other hand, he writes:

> At the beginning, Surrealism treated dreams by means of automatism. In both dreams and automatism, the unconscious is of great value. But as of recently, it started applying another conscious method, a development to that of the unconscious. It brings Surrealism on a different, scientific level in terms of methods it applies.
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> This method is Dalí's paranoia-criticism. It does not take much explaining to say that paranoia is a state of mental derangement and it

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[28] Ibid, p. 259.

[29] 'In Romanticism, for example, a dream is portrayed as it is seen by the author. In Surrealism, on the other hand, a dream is not portrayed as a dream but is used as a method and a tool, and can be considered as a key unlocking the mysteries of the unconscious. In terms of its stance and attitude it should thus be considered scientific, whereas in terms of its approach it is intellectual. Easily speaking, Romanticism tends to live in the dream whereas Surrealism observes it from the outside. From a Surrealist perspective, Romanticism is a subject of observation', as per: Ibid.

> therefore treats pathological conditions. But what I would like to point at is that a distorted condition allows us to clearly grasp the true nature of things. As an example, we can try an experiment by giving a strong steel pole a sudden blow or having it suspended under heavy weight. In other words, a thing reveals its true nature under a distorted condition. As an old saying goes: 'Strong grass knows strong wind' (*shipō ni keisō wo shiru*). In such sense, 'paranoia' applies the condition imposed by mental derangement as a tool and as a clear scientific technique but it is not pathological but healthy. Paranoia-criticism is a method and a means of action.[30]

Thus, his understanding of the Surrealist object strategy provides him with a tool to combine a scientific approach and an art expression to create visual imagery based on his affection for natural objects as a 'means of action' and intervention in the political domain through photographic representation. Furthermore, it revels a strong interest and preference for paranoia-criticism as a method that allows such an action. Positioning itself firmly against the predominant intellectual school of the day, Shimozato's text can thus also be considered as a direct precedent to a significant discussion that will unfold with regard to the Surrealist object in Japan after the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*.

Surrealist object and photography

A specific relation between the Surrealist object and photography will be articulated some two years later, in Takiguchi's 'Object and Photography, Especially the Surrealist Object', published in the *Foto Taimusu* in August 1938.[31] Just as Yamanaka, Takiguchi underlined a specific use of the notion of 'object' in the Surrealist context and quoted the Charles Ratton exhibition as the best example in which it can be grasped.[32] Takiguchi also provided a wider art historical contextualisation of the shift from 'subjectivity' (*sudeisei)* to

[30] Ibid, p. 260.
[31] Takiguchi Shūzō (1938). Buttai to shashin, tokuni shuruearisumu no obuje ni tsuite [Object and Photography, Especially the Surrealist Object]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 8, pp. 64-68.
[32] Ibid, p. 65.

the ‘thing itself’ (*mono jitai*) in modern art following closely Yamanaka’s ‘Revolution of the Object’.[33] To Takiguchi, the Surrealist exploration of objects was devoid of an artist’s subjectivity and was a recognition how objects themselves had a significance extending beyond their utilitarian use.[34] He mapped out the development of the Surrealist object in visual arts from sculpture, claiming that it found inspiration in ‘savage’ objects and asserting how its chief goal was the transcendence of everyday use by appropriation in an art context.[35] In this process of transcendence, he downplayed the role played by Freudian theory in the working of the Surrealist object and insisted how Surrealists only recognised the importance of objects in the experience of everyday life.[36] Thus, Takiguchi also dismissed any potential for revolutionary politics that the Surrealist object might contain and reclaimed it on the level of artistic appropriation emptied of any relevance outside of a purely aesthetic appreciation.

He further listed examples for eight categories of objects, providing their names in French but looking to establish how they would have already been known in Japan, especially in traditional disciplines such as the flower arrangement and display. In the case of ‘natural’ objects (*objet naturel*) he described them as originating from the ‘world of flowers and animals’ and posed a question if they might have been known and appreciated as such in Japan from the old times.[37] A similar knowledge and use was ascribed to the category of ‘found’ objects (*objet trouvé*), which he explains:

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[33] This is evident in an example of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s writing for *Emile* (1781), established in both articles as an early example of how the existence of things was recognised for a primacy over their interpretation and judgement as early as in the late eighteenth century, as per: Ibid, p. 64. Translation of a note from *Emile* on this page reads: ‘The truth is not in contemplation of things but in things themselves’.
[34] Ibid, p. 65.
[35] Ibid.
[36] ‘As everyone knows, Freud assigned a value of sexual appeal to objects, but the essence of this is that things have a ‘quality’ that goes beyond their everyday use. Even if we do not think about the unconscious or imaginative value assigned to objects, we have to admit how they play an important part in our lives. We experience deep and strange feelings towards a landscape (regardless if it is a seascape or a mountainscape) that is a result of the working of objects. Surrealism explores the recognition of exactly such importance of objects’, as per: Ibid.
[37] Ibid, p. 66. The categories listed include natural, savage, mathematical, found, disaster, readymade, mobile and symbolical objects.

> Objects that are dug out or picked up, on a beach or elsewhere, a tree branch, stone, things that we find. They overlap with other types of objects. They are often found interesting for their suggestive power. For example, a found tree branch can look human when turned around and in this case becomes an 'interpreting' object (*objet interprété*). This characteristic of objects was known to the Japanese art of display.[38]

Finally, Takiguchi established the link between the Surrealist object and photography via an example of an English photographer Paul Nash.[39] He claimed photography has a different materiality from painting, an 'anti-artistic' quality that allows it to 'discover' and 'deliver' objects, which are 'photogenic' in nature.[40] The text thus assigns a great potential to photography in the delivery of the Surrealist object, but remains detached from any commentary upon the specific implications it might have in Japan or elsewhere, based on a premise that the Surrealist object functions outside of subjectivity and translating it into the domain of Japanese traditional art of display. The categories he lists, however, can be seen as partly drawing on already established photographic practices in Osaka and Nagoya, keeping in mind Yasui Nakaji's formulation of the 'semi-still life' method and previous writings by Yamanaka and Shimozato.[41] The particular connection between the Surrealist object and photography with regard to an example by a photographer from abroad thus appears artificial in the situation when similar examples would have already taken place in Japan on a significant scale. The example becomes another form of coding of a potentially suspicious material, and Takiguchi's highlighting of the particular categories should be read as an implied accreditation to the existing practices in Japan.

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid, p. 68. Takiguchi tells a story of how Paul Nash reused as an object a sail of the Britannia yacht purchased at an auction by Nan Kivell. As Nash was on the board of organisers of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* it is possible that Takiguchi would know about this episode from Nash directly. As in Yamanaka's previous article, images in Takiguchi's text are also sourced from the 1936 issue of the *Cahiers d'art* for examples of works by Man Ray and Eileen Agar but also include two Nash's photographs.
[40] Ibid.
[41] For how recognition of chance resemblances in found or made objects to human or animal form extended to stones and crystals that Surrealists collected for their animistic properties see: Kelly, Julia (2012). The Found, the Made and the Functional: Surrealism, Objects and Sculpture. In: Dezeuze, Anna and Kelly, Julia (eds.), *Found Sculpture and Photography from Surrealism to Contemporary Art*. Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 44-47.

The popularity of the relationship between the Surrealist objects and photography in the country, which is reflected on in Takiguchi's text, followed from the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*. It only showed the actual Surrealist objects via photographs, whereas the 'photo objects' (*shashin obuje*) became the most popular form of Surrealist photography after the exhibition.[42] However, as the exhibition took place significantly after the importance of the Surrealist object research was established in practices and writings of photographers in Osaka and Nagoya, its relevance as a definite reference point for 'avant-garde' photography in Japan is undisputable but it should be seen as a result of Surrealist efforts in the years prior to its taking place and not as a point of emergence for Surrealist photography in Japan. Remembering how amateur photo clubs were already forced to adopt an euphemistic 'avant-garde' in titles of their clubs after the exhibition, the fact that the political situation in the country would have already changed during the two years between Yamanaka's and Shimozato's texts and Takiguchi's article becomes clear in the latter's dismissal of any impact on reality that the 'photo objects' might have. Regardless of such a seemingly aestheticised view of the Surrealist object, Takiguchi's 'Object and Photography' framed many of the experiments with the 'photo objects' taking place in the same year. In 'New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life' (September 1938) Hanawa Gingo refers the reader with more interest in the Surrealist object to Takiguchi's article as a text of definitive relevance.[43] The article also became a direct incentive for an 'object study' trip to Mountain Yake organised between Abe Yoshifumi, Koishi Kiyoshi and Nagata Isshū, and reported in detail by the three photographers in the October 1938 issue of the same magazine. From Koishi's text, we learn how they met after the Avant-Garde Photography Symposium and decided to go on the excursion for Abe's and Nagata's desire to 'study new methods of expression' following their

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[42] Morita Hajime (2012). Obujekō tenbyōfūni [Thoughts About Objects, in a Sketch Manner]. In: Morita Hajime (et al.), *Nihon Obuje 1920-1970 nendai danshō* [Japanese Object, Fragments of the Decades Between 1920-1970] (Exh. Cat.). Urawa Museum of Art: Bijutsukan renraku kyōgikai, p. 27.

[43] Hanwa Gingo ([1938] 2001). Seibutsu no shashinga no shinhatten [New Developments in Photographic Images of Still Life]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 221.

'impressions of the day'.[44] We also learn how they agreed in advance that Abe would write about objects, that Koishi would keep a diary of the journey and that Nagata would photograph tourist visitors to the mountain.

Figure 5.1: Koishi Kiyoshi, 'Record of a Camera Trip to Kankōchi', *Foto Taimusu*, October 1938, detail.

Figure 5.2: Abe Yoshifumi, 'Object Potential of Mt. Yake', *Foto Taimusu*, October 1938, detail.

[44] Koishi Kiyoshi (1938). Kankōchi kamera kikō [Record of a Camera Trip to Kankōchi]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 10, pp. 44-50. 'Impressions of the day' would clearly point out the practice of Kansai photographers who would organise such excursions and collective shooting sessions in direct exploration of the Surrealist object strategy, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The site, whose name translates as a 'burning mountain', was chosen as an active volcano whose major eruption in 1915 caused a blockage of a local river, forming the lake Shōwa, and scorched surrounding vegetation. Dead trees still remaining at the mountain were to become the main subject of photographs produced by both Abe and Koishi, and are seen in their respective texts as showing a desolated, abandoned and catastrophic landscape (Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2).[45] In Abe's 'Object Potential of Mt. Yake', the dead trees were connected to Takiguchi's text as examples of 'perturbed' objects, 'born out of Mt. Yake's trauma and looking like dead bodies, piercing us in an invitation to trance'.[46] Abe recounted how in most of the cases both him and Koishi photographed the dead trees and stone landscape of the mountain in analogy to other things, for their metaphorical potential, as Takiguchi suggested in his description of 'found' objects. However, he considered such an approach discerning as it reminded him of a type of artist friends who would constantly make remarks how things around them resemble Dalí's paintings or Hans Arp's objects.[47] To Abe, this was alarming as it disrespected the fact that certain things existed in the way they were before receiving a label of a 'Dalian landscape'.[48] He also asserted how such analogical resemblances appeared humorous to them at the moment, as the weather conditions kept limiting what they were able to shoot and as a bond between them grew stronger through conversation. From those observations he concluded how the photographs were finally paradoxical, as the psychological situation from which they resulted was different from what they

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[45] Comparison to Nash's practice in this context becomes more pressing, as the images are compellingly similar to the artist's collection of photographs published in 1946 as the *Monster Field*. Nash had 'discovered' two enormous elm trees uprooted by lightning while visiting friends in Gloucestershire in June 1938, only a month earlier than the excursion took place. The *Monster Field*, not shown or exhibited prior to October 1940, might have been informed by the Czech Surrealists Štyrský and Toyen, who showed works inspired by natural forms at the Surrealist exhibition in London in 1936, as per: Walker, Ian: (2007). *So Exotic, So Homemade: Surrealism, Englishness and Documentary Photography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 25. Yamanaka's article on the two Czech artists from March 1937 also included four untitled reproductions of their work, two per each artist, as per: Note 15 to this Chapter. For two of these photographs see: Nezval, Vítězslav (1935). Strysky.Toyen. *Cahiers d'art*, No. 7-10, p. 135.
[46] Abe Yoshifumi (1938). Obuje no aru yakedake [Object Potential of Mt. Yake]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 10, p. 39.
[47] Ibid, p. 41.
[48] Ibid.

showed, expressing his doubt in the possibility of photography to convey a true image of an object.[49] He writes:

> An important thing is awakened not in our bodies but in our brains from a radiating sublimation that occurs in the spark created between a violent landscape of Mt. Yake and its image. Our task is to make an effort in developing a vision fitting to a new order of consciousness, extinct in the consciousness of the world of popularity.[50]

In other words, Abe departs from Takiguchi's de-subjectified view of the Surrealist objects but equally questions Shimozato's previously stated opinion about how they only mediate a condition induced in the author upon an encounter with an object. The 'world of popularity' refers in Abe's text to the analogical approach preferred by Takiguchi, as it necessarily values those 'popular' things that have already been established and consequently limiting the range of possible sensation. Through such criticism, he recognises a type of camera automatism celebrated by Dalí prior to his development of the paranoiac-critical method, and Abe's reference to Dalí in the text is not without relevance.[51] In a text published in the *Foto Taimusu* a month before, where one of his images from the excursion would also appear, Abe attested to his knowledge of the method.[52] Commenting on his artistic motivation, Abe admitted that his recent interests have included dreams, automatism, objects and the paranoiac-critical method and assigned a great significance to the camera mechanism in the practice of photography.[53] He made sure to criticise a recent practice of Nagoya-based photographers to show grotesque imagery

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[49] Ibid, p. 42.
[50] Ibid.
[51] For Dalí's critique of metaphoricity see: Rothman, Roger (2012). *Tiny Surrealism*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, p. 36. For Dalí's fascination with the objectivity of camera as the 'suppression of the mind's organisational inclinations such that the eye can see things without making sense of them' see: Ibid, p. 45.
[52] Abe Yoshifumi (1938). Zen'ei-teki hōkō hito kōsatsu [A Study in Avant-Garde Methods]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 7, p. 62. Four untitled images accompany this text out of which two are of hatched eggs and follow the beginning of the article in which Abe contextualises his work with regard to the artists who had a similar interest in the motif: Leondardo Da Vinci, Pieter Bruegel, Pierre Roche, René Magritte and Hans Bellmer. The remaining image shows a staged photograph of an absented body substituted with two gloves placed on an armchair, as a similar form of practice taking place among the members of varied Osaka clubs. The article is dated May 25, 1938 and therefore precedes the excursion to Mt. Yake but the image was likely added after the initial submission of the text.
[53] Ibid.

in montage and asked for a re-focusing of the practice on discovery of content in everyday life.[54] At the end of the volume, Abe also added a note to the text, explaining how the use of the word 'avant-garde' should not be interpreted as political but solely artistically charged.[55] His later 'Object Potential of Mt. Yake' therefore calls for a change in the consciousness of the contemporary viewership via production of a piercing visual material, retaining a distanced position from both Takiguchi's text and similar practices in the Kansai region that initiate it, mostly different in their view of the extent to which subjectivity of the artist can be invested in photographing of objects.

The main point of disagreement between the two poles establishing Abe's position, Takiguchi's aestheticised writing and Shimozato's interest in the Surrealist objects for mediating psychological states, however, lies primarily in the importance of Freud's writing for interpretation of the Surrealist object. For Takiguchi, photography is used as a means of objectification, functioning as a mediator between an object and a viewer. For Shimozato (and partly for Abe) there is a clear interest in using objects to mediate a deranged psychological state of paranoia. The difference in interpretation becomes clear in a meeting organised among the chief members of the Nagoya club at the end of 1938, after and possibly in response to the summer 1938 Avant-Garde Photography Symposium held in Tokyo, with notes of the conversation published in the February 1939 issue of the *Kameraman*. Whereas the Tokyo symposium would insist on an apolitical understanding of 'avant-garde', a close reading of the Nagoya meeting notes shows a different level of commitment to Surrealism, and a focused attempt to engage with its defining characteristics: Freudian theory, automatism and particular notions of beauty. It also shows how this commitment was aimed towards activating the field of aesthetics as politically relevant, which was already implied in earlier writings by Yamanaka and Shimozato.

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[54] Ibid, p. 63.
[55] Abe Yoshifumi (1938). Zen'ei-teki hōkō hito kōsatsu, rokujū pēji no tsudzuki [A Study in Avant-Garde Methods, Continuing from Page 60]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 7, p. 105.

‘Camera’s Automatism’ and ‘Surrealist Freud Photos’

The meeting was organised between three members of the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde together with two moderators and a person taking notes on December 29, 1938. In the subsequent report entitled ‘Round Table Meeting Rethinking Avant-Garde Photography’ Shimozato signed as a painter, Yamanaka as a poet and Sakata as a photographer, whereas Nagata Minoru and Takada Minayoshi, minor artistic figures in the area, were indicated as ‘editors’.[56] It aimed to explain in simple terms the discussion developing with regard to ‘avant-garde’ photography, as visible in recent exhibitions and photo magazine volumes, to the readers who did not completely understand what was at stake.[57] Yamanaka made clear his position as a poet and not a visual artist and underlined his view that the discussion developing around ‘avant-garde’ photography is specific to Japan for two distinct reasons. Firstly, he identified how the word itself originated in French in relation to film and arrived to photography in Japan from painting, whereas secondly, it equally referred to Surrealist and abstract tendencies.[58] Thus implicitly suggesting its connotation of Surrealism that was established in the June 1937 volume of the *Atelier*, he agreed with Shimozato that a specific ‘avant-garde’ was recent in Japan, not spanning more than several years, whereas it was Sakata who articulated the difference between abstract and Surrealist strands of the joint term. He explained the divide in accordance with his previously published ‘Photo-Abstraction and Photo-Surrealism’ (in four instalments from December 1937 through March 1938), but the specific hybridity between abstraction and Surrealism implied in the Japanese interpretation of ‘avant-garde’ was this time exemplified with his own photograph.[59]

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[56] Zen’ei shashin saikentō zadankai [Round Table Meeting Rethinking Avant-Garde Photography] (1939). *Kameraman*, February Edition, pp. 17-29.
[57] Ibid, p. 18.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid, p. 20. Similarly to the previous article, Sakata supported his arguments with different examples, illustrations of which also accompany the text: photographs by Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray and himself as showing ‘pure’ abstraction and by Dora Maar, Raul Ubac, Bellmer, Ei-Kyū and himself as indicating a ‘pure Surrealist practice and Freudianism’. Reproductions of Dalí’s

Figure 5.3: Sakata Minoru, *Edible, Animal Mud*, 1939.

Showing what Sakata defined as a 'radical mixture of an abstract formal surface that communicates a Freudian content', the photograph has no caption in the report.[60] However, it was simultaneously published in the *Foto Taimusu* (in February 1939) where its title reads: *Edible, Animal Mud* (*Kashokuteki, dōbutsutekina deido*) and where its Freudian content is reaffirmed in an accompanying note (Figure 5.3).[61] It shows a nondescript mass of mud that opens in the middle in resemblance to female genitalia, with the texture of the material and its shape equally suggesting a plant. Clues to understanding the specific wording in the title, however, are only offered in the notes to the Nagoya meeting, attesting to Sakata's interest in the notion of 'edible' beauty as proposed by Dalí in 'Concerning the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Art Nouveau Architecture' (1933).[62] Shimozato reconfirmed a preference for a practice appearing formally abstract while communicating a

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Suburbs of a Paranoiac-Critical Town: Afternoon on the Outskirts of European History (1935) and Piet Mondrian's *Composition* (1921) also accompany the text.

[60] Ibid. For how the caption in the text reads 'An example in which Freudianism can be seen in abstract form' see: Ibid, p.19.

[61] The image appeared in a monthly section of the best achieved photographs at the beginning of the volume, alongside contributions by Abe and Shimozato whilst the Freudian content of the photograph is referred to as *furoido-teki*, as per: *Foto Taimusu* (1938). Vol. 16, No. 2, unpaginated.

[62] Dalí, Salvador ([1933] 1998), pp. 193-200.

'Freudian' content and underlined that this approach, although seemingly paradoxical, came to him naturally.[63] Thereon, the conversation primarily aimed at a 'rethinking' of 'avant-garde' photography shifted towards a discussion of Freudian theory and its treatment within Surrealist photography. Firstly, Yamanaka established Freud's psychoanalysis as a basis of the 'Surrealist psychology'.[64] Sakata added to this comment that the basic Freudian theory was contained in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1920) and that its main premise was that it was a 'psychology of desire'.[65] As for Nakata such an explanation of Surrealism meant that it was based on a favouring of instincts, he asked for an elaboration of the Surrealist understanding of beauty, and especially Breton's 'convulsive beauty' and Dalí's 'edible beauty'. Shimozato says:

> Both words are only two ways of addressing the same issue. They point at the fact that beauty has so far been comparatively refined and thought to be separated from the everyday, material life. Surrealism wishes to return or maybe even degrade this notion to a more human, instinctive level, that is the main premise behind its thinking.[66]

The view reaffirmed his earlier 'Two Themes', in which his understanding of Breton's and Dalí's views of the Surrealist object were rendered identical. On this occasion, Sakata noted how Yamanaka might disagree, and indeed Yamanaka drew a clear distinction between Breton's and Dalí's views of beauty, pointing at different ways in which the two have interpreted automatism.[67] He adds: 'I find the pathological and unhealthy things that are easy to entrap us in the so-called Freudian sense unpleasant. On the other

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[63] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai (1939), p. 21. The passage reads: 'The way I think about the two is that they are psychologically completely opposite. Abstraction elevates all its components to the level of plasticity whereas Surrealism observes everything psychologically. They appear to me as the West and the East. However, as Yamanaka observed earlier, they are surprisingly easily fused within an artwork. Truthfully speaking, I have not thought about this more deeply than that, on the contrary, it comes very easy that an abstract form reveals a psychological content in my work. Reality is like that as well'.
[64] 'Surrealist psychology would mean Freud's psychoanalysis. It requires thinking about objects (*mono*) in a Freudian manner', as per: Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid, p. 22.
[67] Ibid.

hand, abstraction also has its limitations'.[68] Regardless of a disregard for both, he identified how abstraction could be established as a preferred model of expression to Japanese artists, due to a long tradition of austere interior design of Japanese housing and traditional arts such as the flower arrangement (*ikebana*). However, he significantly departed from Sakata's and Shimozato's expressed views saying how in his opinion a 'search for a healthier poetic expression' should be prioritised.[69] Yamanaka's call, however, was dismissed by both artists, who found the specific mixture between abstraction and what they considered as the 'Freudian' content especially potent. To Shimozato, it offered an opportunity of delivering a visual material that would be rich in association to desire whilst remaining formally purist, adding how 'I wish to smell of the Freudian desire to a point of liberation'.[70] The shift in the discussion thus reaffirmed Yamanaka's previously stated opinion that the exploration of the Surrealist objects through a transgressive potential of sexuality grounded in Dalí's paranoia-criticism might provide a key revolutionary tactic, but that it needed to maintain its communication with a poetic essence. In the previous two years, Yamanaka would have already expressed his reservations that the camera mechanism was able to deliver automatism successfully and thus remained critical of the new work theorised by Shimozato and Sakata. His participation at the meeting, however, reveals an interest in working alongside photographers in a collaborative research process, in which his critical background would assure that the complexity of Surrealist thought would not escape the practice.

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid, p. 23.
[70] Ibid. The paragraph reads: 'I think my direction is opposite. I have reached a point in which I mostly work in abstraction but recently I started finding it insufficient and lonely and thus looking for something richer in terms of desire that would still appear pure on the outside. I would like to continue expanding on this from now on. In sum, something that is abstract but does not bore people'. Sakata affirmed the argument saying how his dissatisfaction with the present conditions in both abstraction and Surrealism resulted in that he 'ended up sitting on both chairs'.

Figure 5.4: Shimozato Yoshio, *Two Volcanoes Having a Break*, 1939.

At the same meeting, Shimozato defined a method that enabled mediation of individual desire through a straight shot in terms of the 'camera's automatism'.[71] An example he offered of the specific method was a photograph *Two Volcanoes Having a Break* (*Nikko no kyū kazan*) (Figure 5.4). It shows a skin of an oak wood that features two protuberances resembling a naked female torso. In the title, however, the photograph is confused with a reference to 'volcanoes' and the image is thus framed as a landscape rather than a close-up. Explaining how automatism should work in photography, he identified that the point that interested him was when a material object manages to fuse with his personal desire and that it was exercised by recognising and photographing this moment.[72] Such a definition of photographic automatism resonates with Dalí's description of the Surrealist object evolution, contained in 'The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment'. For Dalí, the object firstly existed outside of the artist, and could assume the 'immovable shape of our desire', as also described by Shimozato.[73] However, whereas for Dalí the next two phases involved

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[71] Ibid, p. 24. The passage reads: 'For me, thinking about automatism in photography, it takes place when I discover different interesting things in the skin of an oak wood but at the same time while I am looking at it, it manages to relate precisely to something that I feel. It is only in the moment when this happens that I photograph and that is what I think is the 'camera's automatism' (*kamera no ōtomachizumu*)'.

[72] The conversation indicates that the images were also viewed at the meeting, together with volumes of the *Abstraction-Création*.

[73] Dalí describes four phases through which the Surrealist object evolved: '1. The object exists outside us, without our taking part in it; 2. The object assumes the immovable shape of

interaction with the object in achievement of the final fusion, for Shimozato the act of recording is the means of such interaction, and the fusion is presented in the final shot. In other words, both Shimozato and Sakata use the straight shot to deliver imprints of their subjective desire onto objects, and also ascribe to the transgressive character of sexuality as a means of rendering the process recognisable and potentially affective, while applying Dalí's concept of 'edible' beauty to suggest an animate character of the objects photographed.[74]

The specific reference to a volcano, written in Japanese as a 'burning mountain', also becomes important from the perspective of the excursion to Mt Yake and the 'object study' seen in photographs by Abe and Koishi. A direct criticism of their 'study' was provided by Sakata, who followed Shimozato's explanation of the 'camera's automatism' in photography with a comment about how such a practice was much more meaningful than simply amusing with the formal shape of things.[75] He insisted on how from the standpoint of photography, Shimozato's method resembled a well known approach used by practising photographers in which camera is carried without expectation of a subject, in reliance on chance.[76] Unlike the expectation of a chance encounter with an object, Shimozato already had a feeling in himself that he wished to mediate through an object, which he photographed when he recognised it. He says:

> Surrealism that takes place in photography deals with psychological problems, and a lot of it is based on how to interpret things (*monogoto*). Both chance and automatism are considered its basic methods of imagination. In French Surrealism of around 1930 this becomes of great importance. However, I have an impression that there is a type of amusement, which is very light and does not manage to convey anything of great impression. Especially in the recent photo exhibitions and magazines, photographs that only show strange or distinct objects can be seen very often and although they are interesting, they also

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our desire and acts upon our contemplation; 3.The object is movable and such that it can be acted upon; 4. The objects tends to bring about our fusion with it and makes us pursue the formation of a unity with it', as per: Dalí, Salvador ([1932] 1998), pp. 243-244.

[74] In Dalí's case an animate character of Art Nouveau architecture was achieved by juxtaposing photographic details of Hector Guimard's buildings with captions suggesting 'Eat me!', as per: Rothman, Roger (2012), p. 132.

[75] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai (1939), p. 24.

[76] Ibid.

> appear outdated. On the contrary, […] Shimozato's approach of developing a strong relation with the subject of photography seems to me more capable of producing an electric spark.[77]

As Sakata thus identifies the recent exhibitions and magazine volumes in Japan as a source of his dissatisfaction, reference to a 'type of amusement' points at the practice of Osaka-based clubs, which was often described and presented by Hanawa in humorous terms. The specific title of Shimozato's image as well as the use of the word 'spark', however, suggest that both artists were also critical of the photographs taken at the site of Mt. Yake. Given the strong opinions expressed by Abe with regard to the Nagoya club, this is not surprising.[78]

However, returning to the question of 'avant-garde' photography, Yamanaka repeated his suspicion of the hybrid mixture between Surrealism and abstraction. For him, the mixture was confusing, while separation of Surrealism and abstraction required 'a state of mind'.[79] Yamanaka's concern that the mixture of different expressions only signalled insecurity in affirming purely Surrealist content was also supported by his doubt if it were only aimed at a stylistic effect, without a true intention to stir the viewership. The doubt was voiced in asking 'how it would be to find something that would pierce us from an ordinary landscape'.[80] In other words, Yamanaka affirmed the understanding that a formally 'abstract' image would be a required compromise on the side of Japanese photographers to avoid attention of the censorship, but doubted the power of explicitly sexual content as the only means to communicate the process of producing the Surrealist object-photographs. To this comment, Shimozato repeated his understanding of *Two Volcanoes* as precisely drawing attention to the beauty and power of surprise

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[77] Ibid.
[78] This type of inter-textual referencing is interesting for the fact that Koishi reported how Sakata had an intention to join this group only to be withheld in the last moment, as per: Koishi Kiyoshi (1938), p. 55. Repercussions of the 'type of amusement' in going on a photographic trip at that time can also be read against the subsequent assignments of both Koishi and Abe to document the imperial colonies in China and Korea for the Oriental, publisher of the *Foto Taimusu*. These assignments will be discussed in Chapter 7.
[79] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai (1939), p. 27.
[80] Ibid.

in such things that we consider as everyday and tend to disregard. Both artists agreed that it was precisely in the ordinary and the everyday that the power of the Surrealist meaning should be looked for, as for Yamanaka an 'avant-garde' photograph does not 'show a tree trunk for a tree trunk'. [81]

Figure 5.5: Shimozato Yoshio, *Vague Landscape*, 1939.

Vague Landscape (*Kūboku no fūkei*), another of Shimozato's photographs seen in the text and showing an extended and abstracted shot of the same oak wood close-up, affirms his interest to search for 'surreality' in everyday reality (Figure 5.5).[82] As this photograph also indicated a landscape in its title, Sakata pointed out how a possibility of viewing an image for more than it shows required an abandoning of customary thought.[83] The example he gave was that of snow, and how it normally only made an association to coldness. However, to Sakata, if we didn't 'take off the clothes' that we were accustomed to wearing (he gives an example of the samurai robe) 'snow

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid. Another two photographs by Shimozato accompany the report. One is titled *Paranoiac Object* (*Paranoiaku buttai*) and shows a tree trunk close-up whereas the *Object and Light* (*Obuje to rumieru*) renders a view of the Mesemb cactus against a back light. Yoshio also adds an explanation of his images to the report, saying how it is very awkward to him to discuss them in words but that he is complying to the request of the publisher and hopes that such writing might help bring 'avant-garde' photography closer to the readership. He explains how the two photographs discussed in the text are showing a tree in his garden and underlines how *Two Volcanoes* is a purely Surrealist image, as per: Ibid, p. 30.
[83] Ibid, p. 27.

cannot look like female skin'.[84] By requiring 'a change of clothing' from both the photographer and the viewer, Sakata in effect asks for exactly the type of different consciousness called for by Abe in 'Object Potential of Mt. Yake' and affirms Yamanaka's understanding of the key role played by the viewer in the process of recognition of the visual material produced.[85] Therefore, regardless of the formal differences between different clubs, established through inter-textual references to each other's photographs and opinions, it becomes clear how Surrealist photographers around Japan were working more closely to each other than it would initially appear, in agreement that stirring the viewership was a required goal and disagreeing on how it was best achieved. The meeting reconfirms a specific interest on the side of Surrealist photographers working in the wake of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* to find means to awaken and reclaim public consciousness as a form of politically effective action that is forced to operate from within the censored visual culture. The motivation of Nagoya photographers is articulated more precisely and more closely to the orthodox Surrealism by definition of the 'camera's automatism' and a claim of 'edible beauty', under Yamanaka's close scrutiny.

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[84] Ibid. The specific references to 'tree trunk' and 'snow' are of relevance, as they point at how other contemporary practices in Osaka also engage with these specific motifs. See: Note 96 to Chapter 3.

[85] To the mediators, however, this issue required from the author more explanation to the viewers in terms of the preferred way in which the image should be seen, as to them the demand of viewing photographs for more than they actually showed posed a paradoxical situation. However, all the photo club members agreed that the author should not explain his intention and that he only had the caption as a means of making his intention clear, also agreeing that independent interpretations from different viewers would be welcome. At that point the conversation came to an end, without reaching any final conclusions. In the notes accompanying a reprinted version of this text the editor blames the moderators for expressing their own views too frequently and not leading the discussion to a more conclusive end, as per: Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 316.

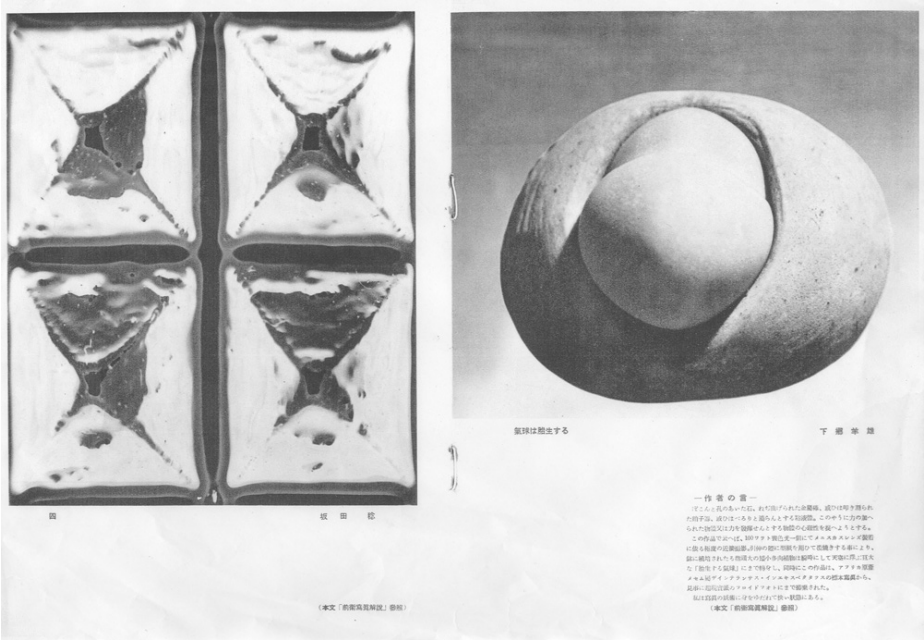

Figure 5.6: Sakata Minoru, *Four* and Shimozato Yoshio, *Womb of Mind Giving Birth*, *Kamera Kurabu*, June 1939, detail.

However, from within its only means of operation, the photographic magazine, Nagoya photographers were equally forced to renegotiate the terms under which their photographs would appear in public. For instance, examples of Shimozato's and Sakata's practice of the 'camera's automatism' were seen in the June 1939 issue of the *Kamera Kurabu*. They both submitted a single photograph to the volume and they are seen together in the magazine's middle spread, delivering an impressive and effective combination (Figure 5.6). Sakata's photograph shows four squares, variations of the same image created by the play of electric light on a diamond glass, in another allusion to female genitalia titled *Four* (*Shi*). Shimozato provides a photograph of the Mesemb cactus, seen in close-up and isolated from the background so as to appear as groundless and suspended in air, indicating a phallus and titled *Womb of Mind Giving Birth* (*Kikyū wa taisei suru*). In the explanatory notes, both photographs are announced as object studies but they are also referred to as the 'Surrealist Freud Photos' (*Chōgenjitsuha no furoido foto*), giving a label to the practice in a matter-of fact manner. The particular terminology would be mobilised by the magazine in a specific way of appropriating

(recoding or reterritorialising) foreign words into Japanese so as to connote a more local reading.[86] Particular meaning of the 'Freudian' content revealed, or indeed concealed, behind formally abstracted photographs would only be hinted at in the previous texts published by the two photographers, and remains consistent. For Shimozato, the main interest behind photographing the Mesemb cactus is established in Dalí's paranoia-criticism, and he confirmed this intention as wanting to 'smell of desire'. For Sakata, the key Freudian text he quotes is *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, where paranoia would be defined, while he also understands Surrealism as a 'psychology of desire'. Whereas the interest in psychoanalysis and Dalí's work can be identified in Shimozato's writing earlier in time, Sakata would have by then already be known as the only photographer advocating for 'photo-abstraction' in parallel to 'photo-surrealism'. The combined interest in both thus seems to arrive from their collaboration in finding the best suitable means for practice. However, in the process of its re-inscribing into Japanese, this practice assumes a label of an innocent and amusing content and thus reflects Yamanaka's fear that its sensationalist character might not achieve its true effect if seen only as a stylistic feature of the image. 'A state of mind' that Yamanaka called for in divorcing Surrealism from abstraction, however, was already made impossible earlier in the decade, as was evidenced in coding of the word 'revolution' in his texts in 1936 and 1937. Therefore, the relevance of Shimozato's and Sakata's efforts to awake the spectatorship by providing a piercing visual material should be considered under the specific time-space of the year, in which no direct political reference would be tolerated in public and when such a material would only be offered space in marginal photographic magazines, as it will be further argued in the following chapter.

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[86] The same conceptual reterritorialisation of Surrealist terminology includes the very term 'Surrealism', often addressed in the texts of the time in an abbreviated form *shūru* from the loanword *shūrurearizumu*. Such re-working of the word can be understood in comparison to a wide application of the word 'surreal' in English. For a related discussion and how the word *shūru* would not have a negative connotation but indicate a more intimate relation to a Japanese reader see: Akasegawa Genpei and Minami Shinbō (2011). Chōgenjitsushugiteki konnyaku mondō [Questions and Answers about Surrealist *konnyaku* Foodstuff]. *Geijutsu Techō*, February Edition, pp. 56-73.

As Neil Matheson has noted, what becomes of key importance under the circumstances is to articulate the exact meaning of the 'political' in its relation to Surrealism, as in the French group from 1936 onwards it entailed 'a shift from political activism into the territory of what is more usually considered the realm of *ethics*'.[87] If we recall that the 'political' in Japan was equally formulated in the domain of aesthetics, in advancement of the idea of the 'national body' as a romanticised time-space achieved in traditional beauty of a rural landscape, Abe's claim of photographic independence of the camera mechanism, and a specific content delivery in the practice of 'camera's automatism' by Shimozato and Sakata, is where its agency should be looked for. Importantly, among photographers who expressed their interest in the Surrealist object, Koishi, Abe and Shimozato all focused on delivery of mountainscapes, and the interest in constructing an imaginary, alternative space can be assessed vis-à-vis the symbolism of Mountain Fuji claimed in the domain of the nationalist aesthetics at the same time.

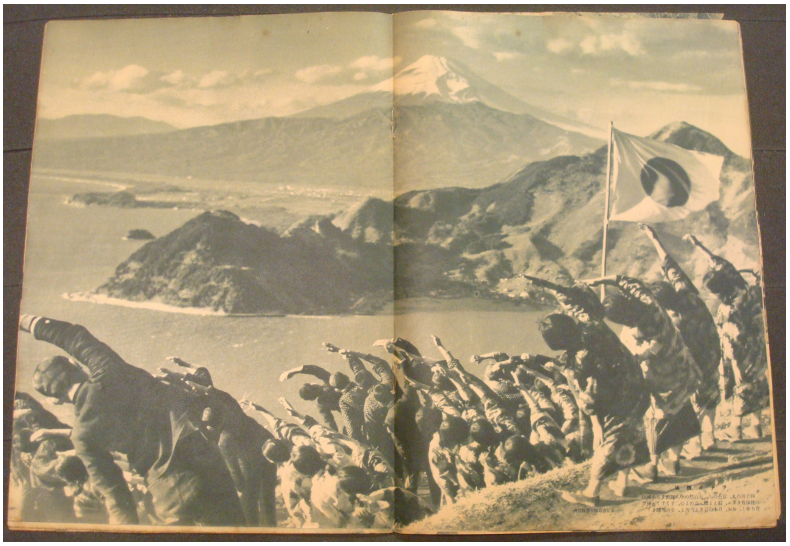

Figure 5.7: *Shashin Shūhō*, January 1938, detail.

The symbolic value of the mountain, as a spiritual peak of the Japanese nation, was communicated though numerous photographs across the

[87] Matheson, Neil (2004). Book Review of Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss (eds.) (2003). *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate. *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 2, p. 7 [Online]. Available to access: http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal2/acrobat_files/matheson_review.pdf [Accessed on September 30, 2013].

illustrated press and in different media, and would be difficult not to register in the public imagination of the time.[88] For example, the January 1938 issue of the *Shashin Shūhō* (*Weekly Photographic Report*) shows a collective exercise session by Japanese school children in front of a view of the mountain and against the national symbol of the Japanese flag (Figure 5.7). The accompanying text printed in the bottom right corner, functioning as a background of the exercise session, provided a transcript of the radio calisthenics (*rajio taisō*), celebrating the flag, the mountain, and the youth as elements of the nation's strength.[89] Against the social imagination that required identification with efforts of the war machinery through beautified views of the country based on the romantic irrationalism, the claims of Surrealist objectivity and an insistence on reclaiming the everyday and awakening a different consciousness by the spark produced in a (straight) photograph should thus be understood as a focused effort to generate a politically active viewership. Although based on the proposition that the 'political' can be claimed in a dematerialised field of aesthetics, when such an effort is seen in the context of its minor history, political agency would be assumed precisely in readiness to communicate and renegotiate the premises of major discourses and practices within which they would be located as the only means to activate its potential.[90] Abe and Sakata agree that a 'spark' can be produced in the encounter of the viewer with an image offering either deserted and destroyed alternative landscapes or an abstracted view of place interpreted by personal desire. Their agreement was based on the premise that an affect and a sensation is a required tool if the images were to create a

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[88] For a variety of photographs used to deliver the symbolism of Mountain Fuji in support of the nationalist propaganda in the 1930s see: *Fuji genkei: Kindai Nihon to Fuji no yama* [*Visions of Fuji: an Incurable Malady of Modern Japan*] (Exh. Cat.) (2011). Shizuoka-ken, Nagaizumi-chō: Izu Photo Museum. As this exhibition shown, the mountain was ascribed with different symbolic values throughout the twentieth century.

[89] Radio calisthenics are broadcasted every morning on the national radio and are still used for collective exercise sessions among school children and company employees in the country. They were first introduced in 1928.

[90] For how 'the minor is a process of forming relations with these conditions that deterritorialise them' see: Thoburn, Nicholas (2003). *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 22.

'community of comprehension'.[91] The 'Surrealist Freud Photos', although a reterritorialised form of the 'camera's automatism', would nevertheless offer an alternative to the 'fascinated and receptive gaze' promoted by the war machinery within the shared space of the illustrated press.[92]

'Neo-Surrealism' unachieved

The Nagoya meeting showed a strong alliance between the photographers of the club in a particular approach to Surrealist photography, using the potential of an authentic interest in both abstraction and natural objects. Such an approach would be further developed in the immediate aftermath of the meeting, during two months of daily collaboration on the *Mesemb Genus* album between January and March 1939.[93] Finally published in 1940, this project enframes their joint interest in the specific practice, as conceived and developed by Shimozato together with Sakata. In delivery of the project, Shimozato did not only mobilise the other photographers of the club, Tajima Tsugio and Inagaki Taizō, but also collectors of the cacti, Sano Sugeo and Satō Yasuhei, whose photographs are also included in the volume. The inclusion of the collectors in the project provided an additional scientific value to the album, and Shimozato made this intention clear in the explanatory notes to the album.[94] The notes also indicated the origin of the plant in South

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[91] For how the term 'community of comprehension' indicates a form of a 'non-rule governed, radically formless experience' required by the Surrealist political orientation see: Stone-Richards, Michael (2003), p. 310.
[92] Baker, Simon (2006), p. 47.
[93] Collaboration is described in Shimozato's diary notes, as per: Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 307-308.
[94] The paragraph reads: 'This photography collection is primarily published with a Surrealist, purely artistic aim but at the same time hopes to be welcomed by biologists and cacti enthusiasts', as per: Shimozato Yoshio (1940). *Mesemu zoku, Chōgenjitsushugi shashinshū* [Mesemb Genus, Collection of Surrealist Photographs]. Nagoya, unpaginated. For the relationship between the specific austere layout of the volume and the Surrealist preference for a similar type of scientific publications see: Stojkovic, Jelena (2012). Systematic Confusion and the Total Discredit of the World of Reality: Surrealism and Photography in Japan of the 1930s. In: Bleyen, Mieke (ed.), *Minor Photography: Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. Leuven: University of Leuven Press, p. 177.

West Africa, celebrating its simple but powerful formal characteristics.[95] The album opens from both sides and features separate titles in Japanese and French on each. In Japanese, the title reads *Mesemb Genus, Collection of Surrealist Photographs* (*Mesemu zoku, Chōgenjitsushugi shashinshū*) whereas in French it reads as *Mesemb, Twenty Surrealist Photographs* (*Mesemb, 20 photographies surréalistes*). Shimozato is accredited as the author and the editor on the cover page of the volume's openings in both languages.

Figure 5.8: Shimozato Yoshio, *Mesemb Genus*, *1-10*, 1940.

[95] 'Mesemb genus, a Mesembryanthemum species from the Thurnan family. This small, fleshy plant can only be found naturally in the dry regions of the South West Africa with little rain. Having one's mind wander over the features of this strange, far off land at the end of the world is actually very amusing. With small or large leaves, it can be said that the leaves make up the complete figure of this plant. At its top, it is full of round shapes. Indeed, it is an enchantingly mysterious plant of refined simplicity', as per: Shimozato Yoshio (1940), unpaginated.

Photographs following the French reading of the volume (left to right) are marked in numbers from one to ten, and are all produced by Shimozato (Figure 5.8). In reverse, in Japanese reading of the album, another ten images produced by all collaborators on the project are titled in Roman alphabet from 'A' to 'J'. Detailed commentary on all the images, together with Latin names of all individual cacti, explanatory notes to the volume, a postscript and the publication details are contained in the middle of the volume.[96]

The opening page to the French reading features a round hole that shows a part of the first photograph, titled in English as *The Door*. It shows a Mesemb cactus placed on a doorknob so as to suggest an 'opening' of the volume, whereas the commentary explains it as 'a passage into a bewitching world'.[97] The voyeuristic experience that the viewer was to experience is also suggested in the understanding of the plant's features as sensual and evocative of 'Freudian symbols'.[98] Shimozato explains the subsequent image, a collage in which a photograph of the cactus is shown as if flying above a house, insisting how the manipulation of the image was necessarily required for a more effective delivery of its content.[99] For the magnified character of the photographs that follow, he asserts how their enlarged size is not unusual to him, as he has seen them as such appearing in his dreams many times.[100] Indeed, close-up and framing play a significant role in how the effect of the images is achieved, together with the design of the layout and the choice of mostly black backgrounds. In the photographs numbered as *4* and *5* we see close-up renditions of the plant foregrounding a sensual texture of its skin but in most of the cases the main metaphorical quality is achieved in resemblance to both female and male genitalia. Some of the photographs are repeating

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[96] Images included here do not show three middle pages. For translations of the middle pages see: Stojkovic, Jelena (2009). *Language of Light: Legacy of Surrealism in 1930s Japanese Photography*. MA thesis, SOAS. The translations and individual reproductions of all the images from the album can be accessed in the Appendix to Ibid.
[97] Shimozato Yoshio (1940), unpaginated.
[98] Ibid.
[99] 'Even what is considered a 'straight' artistic method would have made them sufficiently Surrealist, but in order to demonstrate particular characteristics of this plant even more I tried to add a little craftsmanship. In other words, it can be said that my inherent psyche was expressed through the photographs of these plants', as per: Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

previously published shots of the Mesemb, as in the case of *9*, in which we can see *Womb of Mind* from a different angle. The photographs titled as *2* and *8* have a suggested horizontal viewing whereas *3* shows the cacti collection in two different shots, providing a wider view for some of the images included in the volume**.** The variations in format and character of the photographs thus break down a possibility of narration suggested in the opening of the album. The final image, a shot in which we see a potted cactus placed in front of a number of Shimozato's portraits with a hole breached between them to indicate the position of the camera eye, completes the viewing experience suggested at the beginning.

Figure 5.9: Various Artists, Edited by Shimozato Yoshio, *Mesemb Genus*, *A-J*, 1940.

Viewed from the other side, the album is a compilation of photographs taken by collaborators on the project with coherence maintained by the opening image, a rendition in black of the same collage introducing the volume from its reverse (Figure 5.9). Sakata's contributions, titled as *B* and *D*, offer similar

views of the plant to that of Shimozato's. *B* evokes his *Womb of Mind*, showing a similar type of the plant rendered into an animalistic shape by addition of a swirling extension. In *D*, he provides a close view of the plant to suggest a texture of human skin whereas the layout suggests a horizontal viewing.[101] Tajima also offers close up views of the plant to suggest both female and male genitalia, in *F* and *H*, with the latter also laid out horizontally. Satō submits two images, *C* and *I*, both showing vertical renditions of the plant. The remaining three participants are featured by single photographs, with Inagaki's and Sano's images rendered horizontally (*E* and *G*) and with one the collector's shot of his own collection (signed as K.K.), titled *J*, closing the volume from this side.

Although Shimozato introduced the project to both the publisher of the *Mizue* and Takiguchi during his trip to Tokyo in March 1939, publication of the album was postponed until the following year.[102] The aim of the volume, to combine the scientific and artistic methods in order to provide an erotic experience of the Surrealist natural object becomes the main question at stake for production of Nagoya photographers in this period of time. The specific approach, in which the close-up renditions of a plant were to suggest a sexually explicit and transgressive content, evokes Bataille's writing with regard to botanical images produced by Karl Blossfeldt. Blossfeldt's extensive photographic study of plants, first published in the *Art Forms in Nature* (1928) was exhibited in Karl Nierendorf's Berlin gallery under a title *Exotics, Cacti and Janthur* in 1926, also including sculptures and objects from Africa and New Guinea, thus possibly informing later Shimozato project. The photographs were also shown in *Film and Photo* and therefore known to the Japanese public since 1931. Bataille provided a sexually explicit reading of the photographs in 'The Language of Flowers', his contribution to the *Documents* in June 1929. He writes:

> It seems, in fact, that desire has nothing to do with ideal beauty, or, more precisely, that it only arises in order to stain and wither the beauty

[101] Shimozato makes sure to especially thank Sakata in the commentary, as per: Ibid.
[102] Shimozato makes a diary note that he has a meeting with Takiguchi in this regard on March 15, 1939, as per: Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001), p. 309.

> that for many sad and well-oriented personalities is only a limit, a *categorical imperative*. The most admirable flower for that reason would not be represented, following the verbiage of the old poets, as the faded expression of an angelic ideal, but, on the contrary, as a filthy and glaring sacrilege.[103]

As Dawn Ades has noted, the text recognised how flowers and plants were associated with desire 'not for their beauty, but rather for their grossly sexual hairy organs and distinguishing earthy roots'.[104] This view of beauty was the foundation of Bataille's base materialism, developed in response to his understanding of the orthodox Surrealism as idealist. However, as Elza Adamowicz has shown, 'strong affinities' between Bataille and Dalí were many and are reflected also in the text in question, for which Bataille possibly found inspiration in Dalí's previous 'The New Limits of Painting' (1928).[105] Dalí's first Paris exhibition in 1929 served as a pretext for the development of a heated polemics between Breton and Bataille on the questions of aesthetics and materiality of art, whereas Dalí's position of ambiguity, achieved by the introduction of the notion of simulacra and the development of the paranoiac-critical method placed him between Bataille's materialism and Breton's transcendence.[106] The debate is reflected on in the *Second Manifesto* and was therefore known at least in this form to Japanese Surrealists.

Several of Shimozato's comments made at the Nagoya meeting, such as the view of Surrealist beauty as aiming to 'degrade' aesthetics to a more instinctive level and his wish to 'smell of desire', can be distinctively read as reflecting on Bataille's base materialism. Also, Yamanaka's dissatisfaction with 'pathological and unhealthy things' expressed on the occasion can be read with regard to Bataille's description of beauty as 'filthy and glaring sacrilege'. If therefore an assumption is made that Shimozato was aware of

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[103] Bataille, Georges (1985). *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Translated by Allan Stoekl. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 14.
[104] Ades, Dawn (2008). Little Things: Close-Up in Photo and Film 1839-1963. In: Ades, Dawn and Baker, Simon (eds.), *Close-Up: Proximity and Defamiliarization in Art, Film and Photography* (Exh. Cat.). Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, p. 32.
[105] Adamowicz, Elza (2003). Exquisite Excrement: The Bataille-Breton Polemic. *Aurifex*, No. 2 [Online]. Available to access: www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/aurifex/issue2/adamowicz.html#6 [Accessed on September 30, 2013].
[106] Ibid.

this discussion, his siding with Dalí is made ostensible in 'Two Themes' and accompanying diary notes in which the initial idea for the development of the project is ascribed to his viewing of the 1936 issue of the *Cahiers d'art*.[107] If thus another assumption is made that Yamanaka was also aware of Bataille's writing, it should be noted that Shimozato's views of Surrealism were developing in a close relation to Yamanaka's but from different premises. Whereas Yamanaka would maintain a close interest in the contemporary condition of Surrealist political orientation from an established position as a poet and a translator, Shimozato was primarily interested in Surrealist painting. In 'Explanation of Non-Figurative Art', published in the *Shin Zōkei* in January 1936, he established as the chief sources of his inspiration those members of the *Abstraction-Création group* that worked within both interests in abstraction and Surrealism.[108] In this article, he discussed the group established in Paris in 1931, making a distinction between their members. Whereas the majority was working in 'pure abstraction', the group also included several artists, especially Arp and Kurt Seligmann, who aimed to 'convey a deeper psychological content' in relation to Surrealism.[109] He found the work of the minor group related to his own and also established similarities in the use of abstraction by Surrealist painters such as Joan Miró and Ernst, concluding how 'viewing these works from a perspective of Surrealism they stand for 'Neo-Surrealism''.[110]

In 'Development of Abstraction, Exchange with Surrealism', published in the May 1936 issue of the *Mizue*, Shimozato reaffirmed the problem of inter-relations between abstraction and Surrealism as a key issue of concern to the entire New Plasticity Art Association.[111] He reported how he addressed a

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[107] Diary note made in November 1936, as per: Yamada Satoshi (ed.) (2001), p. 306. The only natural objects in this issue of the magazine that could be regarded as related to Shimozato's project in formal terms are found objects collected by Ernst, resembling some of the later shots of the Mesemb, such as *Womb of Mind*.
[108] Shimozato Yoshio ([1936] 2001). 'L'art non-figuratif' kasetsu [Explanation of 'Non-Figurative Art']. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 254-255.
[109] Ibid, p. 255.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Shimozato Yoshio ([1936 (5)]. 2001). Chūshōhano tenkai, shūrurearisumu to no kōryū ni tsuite [Development of Abstraction, Exchange with Surrealism]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.),

letter to Okamoto Tarō, a Japanese painter resident in Paris at the time and a member of the *Abstraction-Création* to help him grasp the problem first hand. Okamoto's reply confirmed his own interest in Surrealism developing alongside that of Seligmann's as an increasingly popular trend among the younger painters of the group but expressed a concern that abstraction and Surrealism remain different in essence and that their work therefore cannot be considered as belonging to either of them.[112] In the view of this letter, Shimozato's 'Neo-Surrealism' was not aimed at bridging the specific concerns of Japanese artists only but reflected a more specific tension between abstract and Surrealist tendencies taking place among a younger generation of Surrealist artists at the time. As Briony Fer has noted, such divisions were not as clearly drawn in the avant-garde Paris of the time and Arp's involvement in different groups reflected on a 'network of fairly informal alliances and friendships' that would characterise it.[113] Also, it should be noted that Shimozato's attested interest in abstraction throughout 1936 precedes Sakata's, which developed after his move from Osaka to Nagoya.

Shimozato and Yamanaka disagree with regard to the way in which the erotic desire and an explicit sexual content are treated within the practice, as Yamanaka expresses his reservations towards the danger it contains as becoming a stylistic rather than politically efficient tool. The question of style is

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Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 256-258.

[112] Ibid, p. 257. Okamoto Tarō was among the most prominent Japanese artists of the twentieth century who published prolifically later in his career and wrote about his life in Paris during the 1930s on many occasions. For a detailed description of the period see: Okamoto Tarō (1979). Pari no nakama tachi [Paris Friends]. In: *Okamoto Tarō chosakushū, 2: Kuroi Taiyō* [Okamoto Tarō Collection, 2: Dark Sun]. Tokyo: Kodansha, pp. 96-134. According to this text, he was the youngest member of the *Abstraction-Création* when he joined the group aged twenty-one in 1932, three years after his arrival to Paris. There was around 200 other Japanese painters living in Paris at the time, whose main aim was to bring back the knowledge of French art home, whereas young Okamoto immersed himself in art circles, developing strong relations with a number of prominent figures from around the world, including the Surrealists. In the same text he recounts his admiration for and a close friendship with Arp (also based on Okamoto's cooking skills, as Arp developed a strong taste for a Japanese *sukiyaki* dish), anecdotes involving Victor Brauner and Leonor Fini, among others. At the time of the letter, Okamoto was already more inclined towards Surrealism for several years.

[113] Fer, Briony (1997). *On Abstract Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 59. For how such Arp's position, also shared with Miró, opens the questions of interpretation as their work would be simultaneously abstract and Surrealist, rather than either one or the other see: Ibid.

not without interest to Shimozato, who elaborates it in 'Surrealist Painting and Style' for the *Shin Zōkei* in March 1937.[114] There, he identified that Surrealist painting was different from Impressionism or Cubism exactly in its refusal of a single style and followed with a conclusion that it was a requirement that different 'styles' are appropriated for achievement of its goals.[115] For Shimozato, the specific practice established as a basis of 'Neo-Surrealism' extends beyond the problem of style, actively seeking a means of action and a method that would enable it under the conditions enforced by the state censorship at the time. To achieve this, he makes use of Dalí's paranoiac-critical method and if his practice also develops from Bataille's writing, with regard to Blossfeldt's photographs or otherwise, this source is not credited. Shimozato's awareness of Bataille is highly likely, at least in light of his correspondence with Okamoto, as the Japanese painter attended meetings of the *Contre-Attaque* and was later to become a member of Bataille's *Acéphale* group (1936-1939).[116] Bataille's interpretation of Blossfeldt's close-up photographs was largely seen as untrue to the original naturalist purpose of the author. The original, scientific intention of these photographs was highlighted in Takiguchi's 'Recording Plants' published in January 1939 for the *Foto Taimusu*.[117] Therefore, if we take into account the political pressure in 1939, Shimozato's accreditation of Bataille or recognition of his writing by the

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[114] Shimozato Yoshio ([1937 (3)] 2001). Chōgenjitsu kaiga to sutairu [Surrealist Painting and Style]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 261-263.

[115] Shimozato elaborates the style developed by Dalí as 'photographic' and also gives examples of abstraction embraced by the artists such as Miró, Arp and Tanguy, as per: Ibid. For his study of the specific artists, together with Magritte, see: Shimozato Yoshio ([1938] 2001). Chōgenjitsu kaiga no hōhō [Methods in Surrealist Painting]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 264-265.

[116] Tsukahara Fumi (2013). *Setsudan suru bigaku - abangyarudo geijutsu shisō-shi* [Cutting Edge Avant-Garde – History of Thought of Avant-Garde Art]. Tokyo, Ronsosha, pp. 301-303. For a possibility that Yamanaka would be aware of the *Acéphale* as Yamamoto was a subscriber to its magazine see: Munro, Majella (2012). *Communicating Vessels: the Surrealist Movement in Japan, 1923-1970*. Cambridge: Enzo Press, p. 96.

[117] Takiguchi Shūzō (1939). Shokubutsu no kiroku [Recording Plants]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 57-61. In this article, Takiguchi discusses the photographs in comparison to Edward Weston and the American photography tradition. Takiguchi would not be formally aware of Shimozato's complete album until March of the same year but an introduction of his interest in the Mesemb genus was already established in 1937.

best established Surrealist critics might have been as impossible as the use of the word 'revolution'.

Takiguchi's comment on the *Mesemb Genus* followed its publication in the June 1940 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* in '*Mesemb Genus*, Authored and Edited by Shimozato Yoshio'.[118] In the text, Takiguchi highly valued the album for its achievement as an example of 'avant-garde' photography but called the portrayed world 'maniac' (*maniakku to yobareru sekai*).[119] His critique of the album was delivered in that it 'does not exist in a violent heat but is too enwrapped in a voyeuristic warmth of a dream' as he would prefer that the scientific approach highlighting natural conditions of the plant was developed more coherently rather than ascribing to the method Shimozato explained as the presence of his 'inherent psyche'.[120] Therefore, Takiguchi's main criticism was directed toward the rigour in which the scientific method was applied in production of the album, also reflecting differences between their respective understandings of the Surrealist object. This criticism resonates with Dalí's description of the Surrealist objects in 'The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment' that Takiguchi translated in 1935. It therefore also reflects on Takiguchi's personal involvement in introducing Dalí's work to Japanese audiences, as a translator of a significant number of his texts and an author of a monograph published on the artist in Japanese in 1939.[121]

The impact of Dalí's work in Japan of the time was much deeper and wider than in the particular type of photography developed in the Nagoya club. After its initial introduction at the turn of the decade, a significant volume of his writings was translated throughout the 1930s and his paintings reproduced on several occasions. Dalí's wide popularity among Japanese artists of the time

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[118] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1940] 2001). Shimozato Yoshio hencho Mesemu zoku ni tsuite [*Mesemb Genus*, Authored and Edited by Shimozato Yoshio]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 253.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1991-1998). *Nazo no sōzōsha, Sarbadoru Dari* [Salvador Dali, Creator of Riddles]. In: Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13*, *Senzen senchū hen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 3-25.

is suggested in Abe's comment from the 'Object Potential of Mt. Yake', but was also noted by other critics.[122] In addition, Dalí's work can be considered to have been of particular interest to photographers, as he celebrated photography in 'Photography: Pure Creation of the Spirit' (1927) and 'The Photographic Data' (1929) while adopting objectivity of the camera lens in the development of his realistic style of painting.[123] The role played by Takiguchi in introducing Dalí in Japan was of crucial importance and extended to his writing in photography magazines.[124] By November 1939, a month after the submission of the *Mesemb Genus* album, Takiguchi articulated his position with regard to Dalí's impact, saying how:

> Dalí's influence spread rapidly among certain young artists like dark rays. Consequently, it has tended to be interpreted as a contagious infection. As I have been playing the main role in introducing his profile, I seem to have been stigmatized as the carrier of such influence.[125]

As Ōtani Shōgo has pointed out, the wide impact of Dalí's work cannot be seen exclusively as an adoption of purely formal characteristics on the part of Japanese artists, but similarly as in the case of Shimozato's album, as providing them with a tool of a politically effective practice at the time of what Ōtani terms a 'blockade' of any subversive content.[126] That the same 'blockade' would drive Takiguchi's comments is also highly possible, as he was largely interested in distancing himself from a position as 'the carrier of influence' and thus abandoning a role of Surrealist leadership in the country. Another significant fact brought forth by Ōtani is an existing generational gap between the poets and critics who first introduced Surrealism to Japan and

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[122] For Kato Shinya's comment that 'Every Tom, Dick and Harry is painting Dalí-like works', made in September 1937, see: Ōtani, Shōgō (2003). *Dreams of Horizon: Fantastic Paintings in Japan 1935-1945* (Exh.Cat.). Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, p. 21.
[123] Rothman, Roger (2012), pp. 56-62.
[124] For a detailed discussion of Takiguchi's articles about Dalí published in 1939 see Chapter 7.
[125] I rely on a translation by Kikugo Ogawa of this paragraph, as per: Ōtani, Shōgō (2003), p. 20.
[126] Ibid, p. 22.

the emerging generation of artists in the later half of the decade, mostly in their twenties.[127]

Most of the practising Surrealist photographers in the 1930s would fall exactly into the category of an emerging generation that sought an active means of developing their practice as politically relevant in an impasse in which they were not able to express themselves openly as Surrealists for fear of persecution. An attempt to overcome the absence of a single Surrealist group in the country that would facilitate such expression, made impossible in a similar manner as a direct voicing of the word 'revolution', was articulated in Shimozato's 'Neo-Surrealism'. The production and publication of the *Mesemb Genus* aimed to announce the rise of 'Neo-Surrealism', assuming that the transgressive character of sexuality would provide the basis for establishing a collective bond with the viewership and thus ultimately 'revolutionise the mind' of the contemporary visual culture. However, the project of fully implementing such a 'united front' of Surrealist artists of the younger generation in Japan was equally made impossible at the very same time of its attempted realisation, as the militarist campaigning in 1939 would impose conditions of strict control upon all artistic activity even during the process in which the album was being printed. In a postscript to the explanatory notes included in the *Mesemb Genus*, dated October 1939, Shimozato explained how the volume was originally conceived in a larger format, closer to the size of the *Mizue*, but that its present layout resulted from a number of difficulties encountered in the process of publishing.[128] The political conditions in the country would change even during the editing phase of the volume, in a period of around six months, with the new concept of 'plasticity' taking over contextualisation of Surrealist photography from the previous 'avant-garde'. He writes:

> Also, in the period of the last year or so, myself and a group of artists associated with me shifted from a sharp angle and have, simply said, come to the point of a more direct expression of plasticity (*zōkei*) so the works from this collection do not correspond to our present state of mind. We have nevertheless decided not to change the layout of

[127] Ibid, p. 23.
[128] Shimozato Yoshio (1940), unpaginated. The final size of the album is 46.2 x 32.8 cm.

> photographs or articles due to an effort we have already invested in putting them together.[129]

In late 1939, Shimozato is thus forced to plead to the public to excuse the previous ‘sharp angle’ and still accept the volume due to the efforts already invested in its publication. However, although the latest change of terms and substitution of the words ‘avant-garde’ with ‘plasticity’ would allow its appearance, it would also signal the failure of ‘Neo-Surrealism’ to actualise in the conditions of intensified political oppression. The failure would not mean abandonment of Surrealist photography but another change of terms under which it came to be regarded in 1939 and 1940.

[129] Ibid.

Chapter 6

No things: Photo plasticity, suspension and abstraction

In the previous chapters, it was established how Surrealist photography in Japan emerged from the 'new' and artistic practices at the beginning of the decade. It was further argued how the context of the 'photo avant-garde' allowed a better crystallisation of its main preoccupations with how to undo spatial and temporal linearity of representation in exploration of the Surrealist object. Its political relevance was affirmed against the notion of the 'national body', as the main policy of the increasingly oppressive militarist regime, and within its minor historical assemblage. The political relevance was argued both in terms of spatiality, in representations of the body and landscape as well as in terms of temporality, in breaking away from a coherent use of the photographic surface in the production of Surrealist photo-collages. In 1939, another significant strand of practice defined as photo 'plasticity' further required Surrealist photography to renegotiate the terms under which it would maintain its active presence in the public domain, with materiality and abstraction as the main subjects of concern. As the shift would take place at the same time as the recognition of photography as an independent art form, it would also reflect on the dissatisfaction of Surrealist photographers with a marginalised position imposed on them by being categorised as amateurs.

This chapter discusses the precise meaning of photo 'plasticity' as another contextualisation of Surrealist photography. It shows how varied photographers were interested in reversing scales of significance and imagining a space where marginal or insignificant things could be valued on an equal basis, through the further developments of Surrealist object photography within this framework. It finally provides a close reading of a body of work that Sakata Minoru produced in 1939 so as to reveal the full development of Salvador Dalí's paranoia-criticism in his practice and with regard to photographic 'plasticity'.

Systematic confusion of the world of reality

In March 1939, the Avant-Garde Photography Association changed its name to Photo Plasticity Research Association (*Shashin Zōkei Kenkyūkai*) whereas the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde, only just established in around February of the same year, would change its name to Nagoya Photography Culture Association (*Nagoya Shashin Bunka Kyōkai*) in November. There was no more tolerance for any activity even remotely considered unpatriotic in 1939, with the very word 'avant-garde' being banned from use. After the National Mobilisation Law was passed in 1938, the government started exercising absolute control in the cultural field by establishing the Army Art Association (*Rikugan Bijutsu Kyōkai*) in 1939, with military officials touring exhibitions and publishing their opinions in art journals.[1] In 1940, the Free Artists' Association (*Jiyū Bijutsuka Kyōkai*) would change its name to Creative Arts Association (*Bijutsu Sōsaku Kyōkai*), suggesting that it was not the 'avant-garde' specifically that would be considered subversive but any similarly decadent word such as 'freedom'. Abstract practices of the time were regarded as equally intolerable to those of Surrealism and were under a threat of persecution.[2]

The change of the Tokyo club's name was announced in the April issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, in an unsigned report 'Photo Plasticity Research Association: Photo Experiment Group', also providing a version of the group's new name in English.[3] The simultaneous existence of two names in Japanese and English was explained as an effort to internationalise the activities of the club. The difference between the wording, 'photo plasticity research' in Japanese and 'photo experiment' in English, was noted as possibly confusing Japanese

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[1] Tiampo, Ming (2011). *Gutai: Decentring Modernism*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 37-38.
[2] For how Major Kurazo Suzuki openly threatened abstract artists in a round table discussion reported in the *Mizue* in January 1941 saying: 'Those who don't obey orders will have their rations cut off. Another way to deal with this problem is to simply refuse permission to the exhibitions' see: Yoshihara, Jirō (et al.) (2005). *Jirō Yoshihara: A Centenary Retrospective* (Exh. Cat.). Osaka City Museum of Modern Art: Asahi Shimbun, p. 109.
[3] Shashin zōkei kenkyūkai ni tsuite: Photo Experiment Group [Photo Plasticity Research Association: Photo Experiment Group] (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 28.

language speakers but as making clear to foreign audiences the nature of their club's activities. László Moholy-Nagy's definition of 'photo plasticism', coined in 1925 in reference to the sculptural sensitivity of photography, was dismissed as inadequate to the particular context in Japan.[4] It was rather contextualised as providing a framework for continuing the exploration of 'avant-garde' photography, while avoiding the 'danger' behind the word and affirming a mixture of Surrealist and abstract tendencies that it presently contained.[5] The 'danger' without doubt referred to a link between the 'avant-garde' and the 'Russian revolutionary avant-garde' that the word still connotes in Japanese in the present, and which was clearly identified at the symposium in the previous year. On the other hand, the mixing of Surrealist and abstract tendencies as a means of practice of primarily Surrealist photography, was not explained.

The use of the word *zōkei* as indicating 'plasticity' is immediately evocative of the New Plasticity Art Association, as the first collective pursuing Surrealist painting in Japan since 1934 and enlisting among its members all the best established Surrealist photographers and critics: Yamanaka Chirū, Shimozato Yoshio, Imai Shigeru and Takiguchi Shūzō. The interest of the group in those artists such as Joan Miró and Hans Arp who would equally consider themselves as Surrealist and abstract was previously made clear by Shimozato. With a specific regard to photography, the word would also stand for its practice as an independent art form in Japanese art circles of the 1930s. For example, reports from the second and the third annual exhibitions of the Free Artists Association in 1937 and 1939 included 'photo plasticity' (*foto puraschiku*) under the list of artworks suitable for submission, alongside better recognised categories of oil painting, watercolour, object and drawing.[6] Photo

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[4] Moholy-Nagy, who first defined the concept within the Bauhaus's New Vision, referred to a sculptural sensitivity of photography in an attempt to transform the medium from reproductive to a productive one, as per: Marcoci, Roxana (et al.) (2010). *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today* (Exh. Cat.). New York: Museum of Modern Art, p. 11.
[5] Shashin zōkei kenkyūkai ni tsuite: Photo Experiment Group (1939), p. 333.
[6] Dai ni kai Jiyū Bijutsuka Kyōkai tenrenkai mokuroku [Exhibition Catalogue of the Second Exhibition of the Free Artists Association] (1937), pp. 24-26; Dai san kai Jiyū Bijutsuka Kyōkai tenrenkai mokuroku [Exhibition Catalogue of the Third Exhibition of the Free Artists Association] (1939), pp. 28-30. Making an application in a suitable category was the first of sixteen rules framing submissions to the exhibitions. These also included a number of works

'plasticity' thus indicated a practice of photography as an art form before its official acceptance in the national exhibitions, which did not take place until 1939.[7] This relation was also suggested in Takiguchi's translation of C. Giedion-Welcker's *Modern Plastic Art* (1937) in the magazine *Mizue*.[8] 'Plasticity' in painting and sculpture was there related to photography through the increasing popularity of object photography, which Takiguchi identified as the chief purpose of his translation.[9] Therefore, the word had a significant resonance in the contemporary practices that were related to a mixture of Surrealist and abstract art and connoted photography as an art practice or as a means of delivery of the Surrealist objects. Similarly to 'avant-garde', however, different writers and artists would refer to the word 'plasticity' in both its Japanese version (*zōkei*) and as a loanword (*puraschiku*), adding to the confusion as to its exact meaning. Also, an already allusive meaning would significantly vary through to 1940, when it would simultaneously come to stand for different photographic approaches developing around the country, in different photo clubs in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Fukuoka and within their different forms of relating to the Surrealist object and abstraction as the predominant issues of concern. Attested as tolerable by the nationalist programme of the day, however, it nevertheless assumed a position of a major practice, against which Surrealist photography was required to shift its position so as to remain operative in the public domain. The fact that the word itself was ambiguous enough to connote disparate meanings was reflective of the political climate in 1939, in which the very use of the word Surrealism, similarly to that of

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that each artist was allowed to submit, required information he or she needed to provide and the like. Both exhibitions included over 200 artworks and catalogue lists were printed to accompany the viewing.

[7] For how a photo section of the Creative Association of National Painters (*Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai*), one of the oldest art associations in Japan with an exhibition known as the *National Exhibition* (*Kokuten*) was set up in 1939 see: Mitsuda Yuri (2009). Shōwa zenki no bijutsukai to shashin sakuhin [Art World and Photographic Works in the Early Part of Shōwa]. In: Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo [Tokyo Research Institute for Cultural Assets] (ed.), *Shōwaki bijutsu tenrankai no kenkyū: Senzenhen* [Research into Art Exhibitions in Shōwa Era, Prewar Period]. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, p. 379.

[8] Giedio-Welcker, C. ([1937] 1991-1998). Kindai Zōkei Geijutsu [Modern Plastic Art]. Translated by Takiguchi Shūzō. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 12*, *Senzen senchū hen II: 1937-1938* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 12, Prewar and War Period 2, 1937-1939]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 207-217.

[9] Ibid, p. 207.

revolution, avant-garde, freedom or abstraction, was bound to raise suspicion from the state censors.[10]

Takiguchi and Nagata Isshū elaborated the exact meaning of their club's new name in a lecture that was reported on in the *Foto Taimusu* in May.[11] Takiguchi underlined a problematic dual meaning of 'avant-garde' photography in Japan thus far, as it connoted both Surrealist and abstract tendencies, and repeated how the change of name did not mean the change of interest but rather offered a better focus to the existing practice.[12] This time, Takiguchi's definition of Surrealist photography was based on a premise that photography was always an illusion, made with an immanent element of fantasy.[13] For Takiguchi, Surrealist photography could be considered 'as pushing to the limits such psychological and fantastical use of the medium', claiming that it was located in pursuit of the imaginary.[14] That the 'fantastical' would be closely related to the 'psychological' in this definition, indicates how Takiguchi's understanding of fantasy was embedded in psychoanalytical terminology and thus referred to the writing of Sigmund Freud. In Freud's theory, fantasy manifests as a fulfilment of a wish, either on the conscious level in a form of a daydream, or on the unconscious level where it is a reflection of a subliminal, preconscious reverie.[15] As its achievement in photography would thus involve construction of a fictional scenario, Takiguchi

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[10] For how although the word was inspired by its use in Bauhaus, it does not have an exact equivalent in English language and stands for 'any manner of image creation' see: Takeba, Joe (2003). The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization. In: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.), *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 153. For how the word was 'free of the dangerous, foreign connotations of both *avant-garde* and *Surrealism*', see: Ibid. Due to its equal application as a loanword, the word 'plastic' is used within this thesis as the closest equivalent of *zōkei* in English within the framework specified by critics and artists of the time.

[11] Takiguchi Shūzō (1939). Zōkei shashin kōenkai no kiroku yori [Report on a Lecture About Plastic Photography]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 93-95.

[12] Ibid, p. 95.

[13] 'There is an element of fantasy in photography. Although the word 'fantasy' can be misleading and is understood in a narrow way I use it in a very broad and more essential sense. At a glance, it might appear paradoxical that a fantastical element is inherent to photography and that this might not be the right way to understand it, but this element of fantasy has been used strongly by photography in its development. How this can be understood is that a so-called 'real' photograph that we can easily relate to would actually be a photographic illusion that is created with a strong control of a fantastical ability', as per: Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand (1973). *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company, pp. 317-318.

made sure to underline how 'obviously forged' or 'artificial' photographs were not sufficient for delivery of fantastical content.[16] To this he added how 'simply taking pictures of dirty or strange things' would also not suffice to a Surrealist photograph, remaining insistent that a 'spark' produced in juxtaposition of unrelated images, the main strategy of Surrealist poetry, should be pursued in photography as well.[17] To Takiguchi, the chief method for producing Surrealist photography thus remains adhered to a poetic image, achieved in unconventional juxtapositions, whereas his criticism of both overtly constructed photographs and those depicting 'dirty or strange things' can be read against the existing practices in Osaka and Nagoya. A straight photograph, he insisted, should be more than sufficient to 'create a Surrealist spectacle in reality so that we have an impression of already having seen it', whilst making clear how the highest level of originality and creativity would be required for its production, and that it could not result from a purely sentimental motivation.[18] Nevertheless, on this occasion Takiguchi also acknowledged photomontage to have played a significant role in delivery of the Surrealist image, as exemplified in the work by Max Ernst.[19]

Abstraction, Takiguchi claimed, was similarly immanent to photography as fantasy, as he insisted that 'photography is a type of abstraction'.[20] The definition might be read as a view of photography that reflects the abstract

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[16] 'Associations invoked in a Surrealist spectacle have no power in those cases when they take place within the borders of 'surreality'. In other words, the things that are obviously artificial and forged fail to make an impact', as per: Takiguchi Shūzō (1939), p. 95. For a definition of fantasy as a 'matter of staging' see: Burgin, Victor (1992). Fantasy. In: Wright, Elizabeth (ed.), *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p. 85. For the relationship between fantasy and photography as requiring an element of staging see: Allmer, Patricia and Van Gelder, Hilde (eds.) (2007). *Collective Inventions: Surrealism in Belgium*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p. 219.

[17] 'It goes without saying that simply taking pictures of dirty or strange things does not suffice to create a Surrealist or an avant-garde photograph. I apologise for quoting Surrealist theory on this occasion but André Breton said something very interesting in terms of a poetic method. To him, two images as different as light and dark or plus and minus create a spark when combined, which results in a poetic impact. This is a method to produce a strange feeling in poetry, in combination of words, but I believe the same can be said for photography as well', as per: Takiguchi Shūzō (1939), p. 95.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

socio-political conditions that surround it.[21] However, Takiguchi supported this argument with the fact that photography was primarily a scientific process, based on a chemical development, exemplifying it in the case of solarisation.[22] To him, neither fantasy nor abstraction could be practised in photography without each other, regardless of the fact that their simultaneous existence within the same practice might appear paradoxical. This characteristic, he insisted, would become even more evident as photographic technology continued to develop and therefore the aim of their club was to treat them equally within the new concept of 'plasticity'.[23] Following Takiguchi's definition that 'plastic' photography is in essence a Surrealist construct produced by the exploration of fantasy in the process of photographic development, Nagata followed by explaining its specific technical manifestations: rayography, solarisation, photomontage and collage, re-appropriating the entire discourse already established throughout the decade in relation to the medium previously labelled as 'new' or 'avant-garde'.[24]

Although Takiguchi's address makes clear a Surrealist origin of the new concept in relation to fantasy, it also reflects on the situation in Surrealist photography developed in Japan during the last year and is therefore a substantial departure from his earlier texts. The new term, enforced by governmental bodies monitoring art production in the year, was thus utilised to affirm a specific situation in which Surrealist photography was practised in Japan with regard to abstraction. Previously described by both Yamanaka and Takiguchi as a preferred method of practice for Japanese artists, abstraction was in effect conditioned by increasingly severe censorship of any politically or sexually explicit content. Takiguchi's argument thus takes advantage of a specific moment in the history of Japanese photography, with respect to advancement of technology and recognition of the medium as an independent art form. However, it also reflects on his general interest in modernist

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[21] For how photographs are understood as mainly signifying 'something 'out there' in space and time that they have to make comprehensible to us as abstractions' see: Flusser, Vilém ([1984] 2000). *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. London: Reaktion, p. 8.
[22] Takiguchi Shūzō (1939), p. 95.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

photography that did not result from his activities as a Surrealist poet and translator of the major Surrealist texts in Japanese. His art historical approach in addressing Surrealist photography in Japan is evident in his previous writings in 1938 and 1939 but his wide interest in photography should also be noted. For example, his translation of Barbara Morgan's 'Photomontage' for the *Foto Taimusu*, published in three instalments in the March, April and June issues in 1939 attests to this interest.[25] Also, although the change of the club's name was justified in terms of the internationalisation of their activities, it was not sought in relation to the international Surrealist circles but was based on his correspondence with Moholy-Nagy.[26] Takiguchi rejects Moholy-Nagy's writing as a single origin of the word 'plasticity' but he also explores the significance he ascribed to abstraction and materiality of photography in an attempt to integrate them with an already existing practice.

As a matter of fact, it was Sakata Minoru who first introduced the triple relationship between Surrealism, photography and abstraction through the medium's technological capabilities and from a practitioner's perspective. In 'Basic Explanation of Surrealist Photography and Abstraction', published in two instalments in the May and June 1939 editions of the *Shashin Saron*, this position and perspective were clearly foregrounded, expanding on his previous writings published in this regard in 1937 and 1938.[27] Appearing in

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[25] Morgan, Barbara ([1939) 1991-1998). Foto Montaju [Photomontage]. Translated by Takiguchi Shūzō. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Senzen senchū hen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 309-346. For how Takiguchi was also most probably behind an article on Herbert Bayer published in the March 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* and an article on Dora Maar published in the same magazine in April 1940 under initials 'T.S.' see: Notes to Ibid, pp. 771-772.

[26] For a detailed discussion of Moholy-Nagy's New Bauhaus see: Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1991-1998). Sōzō kunren to shashin [Training in Plasticity and Photography]. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Senzen senchū hen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 175-193. For Takiguchi's report on his correspondence with Moholy-Nagy see: Takiguchi Shūzō (1940). Mohori Nagii kara no tegami sono ta [Letter from Moholy-Nagy and Other]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 22-23. For how the Photo Experiment Group gathered samples of 'plastic' photography in the country, including the clubs in Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, and sent them to Moholy-Nagy for the second time see: Ibid. For how the photographs were not sent with the intention of getting close to the style of the school but in order to seek a means for Japanese photography to become appreciated in the US see: Ibid.

[27] Sakata Minoru ([1939] 2001). Chōgenjitsushugi shashin to chūshūzōkei (abustrakushon) no gutaitekina setsumei [Basic Explanation of Surrealist Photography and Abstraction]. In:

the press at the same time as the report on the Tokyo club's lecture, Sakata's affirmation of the concept of 'plasticity' was almost identical to Takiguchi's, but remained insistent on a difference between the clubs in Tokyo and Nagoya in their approaches to psychoanalysis.[28] He writes:

> There is a group of advanced Surrealist researchers in Japan who, instead of affirming Freud's psychology in general, developed a different approach, rejecting some of its parts and amending them suitably, and are now paying the price for investing efforts in establishing a new vision of psychology, characteristic of materialist art.[29]

The 'advanced Surrealist researchers' refer to photographers of the Nagoya club and the 'price' that they are paying is reflected in the fact that regardless of their efforts invested in producing the *Mesemb Genus*, its publication was still being postponed. Sakata's key disagreement with Takiguchi is thus contained in his insistence that Nagoya photographers were interpreting Freud's writing by 'rejecting some of its parts'. The rejection would indicate Salvador Dalí's well-known departure from Freudian interpretation of paranoia in the paranoiac-critical method. [30] In his monograph on Dalí, Takiguchi did ground the artist's work in a close reading of Freud, but made sure to distinguish paranoia-criticism as primarily an artistic tool developed by the

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Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūruearisumu 3: Shūruearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 350-360.

[28] Sakata agreed with Takiguchi that although the word 'avant-garde' originated in French, the specific practice of 'avant-garde' photography was particular to the 'photographic world in the country' (*wareware ga kuni no shashinkai de*) in that it combined both Surrealist and abstract research, as per: Ibid, p. 350. His definition of the relationship between Surrealism, photography and abstraction also agreed with Takiguchi's and was formulated as 'photo plastic art' (*shashin zōkeijutsu*) and established through the historical development in painting. The historical approach was maintained in his overview of Surrealism, in which he made a distinction between Breton's definition of automatism in the 1920s and Dalí's application of the paranoiac-critical method to address the recent experiments with the Surrealist object, as per: Ibid, pp. 359-360. Sakata asserted how Dalí's paranoiac-critical method based on Freudianism, defining it as 'psychoanalysis developed by the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud', and insisted how Dalí's paranoia-criticism initiated a 'new epoch' in the development of Surrealism, as per: Ibid, p. 360.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Rothman, Roger (2012). *Tiny Surrealism*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, Note 43, p. 221.

artist in relation to his own work.[31] He went as far as to mention the examples of psychoanalytical analysis of Dalí's painting by Georges Bataille and Julien Levy but contrasted them with Dalí's own statements concerning how it would be very difficult to apply psychoanalysis when approaching his work.[32] On the other hand, 'suitable amending' would refer to the application of abstraction. Although largely enforced by the political climate in 1939, abstraction would be regarded as closely related to Surrealist artists of the new generation and as one of the previously defined characters of 'Neo-Surrealism'. That the 'rejection' would aim to establish a 'new vision' through photography as a 'materialist art' indicates the final aim of such photography to achieve the awakening of the spectator as a politically effective action, and confronts Takiguchi's refusal of Surrealist leadership in the public domain.[33]

Read alongside each other, Takiguchi's speech and Sakata's article, therefore, agree on most of the premises defining the new concept of 'plasticity' except for the particular importance ascribed to Dalí's paranoiac-critical method. Sakata's view should thus be read as a departure from the practice of Surrealist photography as defined by Takiguchi, due to his repeated insistence on the Surrealist potential of straight photography to deliver a type of a poetic image considered fundamental to the definition of Surrealism. Regardless of the fact that most of the best established Surrealist photographers (including Abe Yoshifumi from Takiguchi's immediate circle)

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[31] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1991-1998). *Nazo no sōzōsha, Sarbadoru Dari* [Salvador Dali, Creator of Riddles]. In: Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13*, *Senzen senchū hen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3*,* 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, p. 12.

[32] Ibid, pp. 13-15. For how with regard to Bataille's analysis of *Lugubrious Game* (1929) and Levy's discussion of *Accommodations of Desire* (1929) Takiguchi asserted how such approaches were not of interest to him personally see: Ibid, p. 15.

[33] The article finishes with a summary of Surrealism's development in Japan, and with Sakata's explanation of how Fukuzawa Ichirō, Takiguchi Shūzō and Yamanaka Chirū helped its introduction to the country, and how it also became recently practised in photography. He acknowledges that Surrealist photography was practised in art groups such as the Independent Art Association*,* the 'Record of Wounds' Art Association as well as in photography clubs in Osaka (Avant-Garde Image Group), Nagoya (Avant-Garde Photo Club) and Tokyo (Avant-Garde Photography Association). However, he concludes that the practice was only several years old and that, as many other things in Japan, it came *late* (*okure*) for historical and varied other reasons, as per: Sakata Minoru ([1939] 2001), p. 360. Sakata omits the New Plasticity Art Group that was formed from the Independent Art Association (established in 1930) and refers to the Osaka club as the Plastic Group (*Zōkei Shudan*). The text does not register the change of name of the Tokyo club.

would have expressed their knowledge of and an interest in Dalí's paranoiac-critical method, Takiguchi would continue to insist that Surrealist photography was essentially a method for the production of poetic images, maintaining a position that it should remain grounded in language. The insistence that poetry rather than painting was the best suited ally to photography in delivery of Surrealist content was already established in his two key articles in the previous year, published under the concept of 'avant-garde', and continued to inform his writing about Surrealist photography within the newly formulated 'plasticity'. In 1938, Takiguchi himself attempted a psychoanalytical analysis of Dalí's work in 'Salvador Dalí's Morphology', a text published in the *Mizue*.[34] In this article, he identified how Dalí was 'a contemporary painter of fantasy' in the opening sentence, establishing a link to the later formulation of photography as immanently 'fantastical'.[35] Also, in the following monograph about Dalí, published in January 1939, he further situated his work in relation to photography, claiming that it was the best example of 'photogenic' art of the twentieth century.[36] In other words, although Takiguchi affirms a strong relationship between photography and Dalí's work, he only acknowledges its relevance in the domain of creating a type of fantasy that remained closely embedded in Freud's theory but dismisses the importance of his paranoiac-critical method, whereas Sakata seeks a way to make an active use of it.

There should be no doubt that all psychoanalytical premises of Dalí's paranoia-criticism were well known to Japanese Surrealist photographers and critics, and especially to Takiguchi. Similarly to revolutionary literature or avant-garde art, psychoanalysis was also understood to be a 'dangerous, Jewish system of thought'.[37] Regardless of this situation, at least two separate texts in Japanese would have made comments on the relevance of Freudian theory for modern art and particularly Surrealism, both published on the

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[34] Takiguchi Shūzō (1938). Sarbadoru Dari no keitaigaku [Salvador Dalí's Morphology]. *Mizue*, No. 400, pp. 13-16.
[35] Ibid, p. 13. For how Takiguchi discussed Dalí's paranoiac-critical method and especially the notion of 'phantom' through Jacques Lacan's writing see: Ibid.
[36] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1991-1998), p. 13. The word 'photogenic' is used both as a loanword *photogenikku* and in Japanese translation as *shashinteki*.
[37] Parker, Ian (2008). *Japan in Analysis*: *Cultures of the Unconscious*. Basingstoke, England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 27-30.

occasion of Freud's death in 1939. 'Freud and Modern Painting' was written by Ōtsuki Kenji and published in the December issue of the *Bijutsu Bunka* (*Art Culture*).[38] This text commented on how Freud's writing was relevant to Surrealism, adding that there were interesting examples of Surrealist art in Japan. He offered a psychoanalytical reading of a personal dream saying that it could also symbolise a 'dream of the people' or a 'dream of the nation'.[39] The second text, 'Freudianism and Contemporary Art', was published by Takiguchi in the November 1939 issue of the *Mizue*, again making links to how Freud's theory was incorporated within Surrealism.[40] Although Takiguchi clearly identified how different Surrealists such as Dalí and Ernst made use of psychoanalysis to formulate their politically engaged practices, no comment was made on how such a use registers in Japan. In the case of Ōtsuki's dream example, it makes a clear link between the portrayals of individual dreams and socio-political critique. Takiguchi's extensive article, on the other hand, clarifies Breton's relationship to psychoanalysis, in both the first and the second Manifestoes as well as in his 1935 address to the Prague group.[41] As in a number of his previous texts, Takiguchi maintains an art historical approach, but the intensity and depth of his analysis speak well of the level on which psychoanalysis was known and discussed in Japanese art circles. However, he refrains from making any links between psychoanalysis and photography, regardless of his clear interest in both.

Takiguchi's siding with Breton in his increasing dissatisfaction with and open criticism of Dalí in the later part of the 1930s should also be noted. Although he would address all aspects of Dalí's career up to the present in the 1939

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[38] Ōtsuji Kenji ([1939] 2001). Furoido to kindai kaiga [Freud and Modern Painting]. In: Omuka Toshiharu (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūruearisumu 2: Shūruearisumu no bijutsu to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 2: Surrealist Art and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 131-133.
[39] Ibid, p. 132.
[40] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1991-1998). Furoidoshugi to gendai geijutsu [Freudianism and Contemporary Art]. In: Makoto Ōoka (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13*, *Senzen senchū hen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3*,* 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, pp. 245-254.
[41] Takiguchi establishes that the relationship between psychoanalysis and art was reflecting on the connection between art and science and stresses how the very important notion of the 'unconscious' was identified as relevant to art even before Freud in the practice by other psychoanalysts such as Pierre Janet. As a prehistory of Breton's involvement with Freud, Takiguchi establishes Dadaist interest in psychoanalysis, as per: Ibid, pp. 245-247.

monograph, Takiguchi's continuous interest primarily in Breton's writing will be reaffirmed in both 'Freudianism and Contemporary Art' as well as in the speech discussing the term 'plasticity' after the monograph was published. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, Takiguchi would deny any responsibility for the resonance of Dalí's work in the political domain in Japan. Similarly as in his approach to Surrealist photography, his primary positioning as an art historian and critic and not (only) a Surrealist poet and translator would enable his active presence in the art circles of the time and possibly grant him freedom after eight months of imprisonment in 1941 due to his involvement with Surrealism.

However, a reading of Freud on the side of art historians and critics was not the sole route for the dissemination of psychoanalytical knowledge among Japanese artists. They would have referenced the link between Freudian theory and Surrealism directly and throughout the decade.[42] In the case of the photographers based in the Kansai region, their analysis and discussion of Freudian theory precedes all of the major Takiguchi's texts on both Dalí and psychoanalysis and was developed independently. 'Rotting Donkey' (1930), one of the first texts in which Dalí defined paranoia-criticism, was translated in Japanese by Yamanaka Chirū in December 1937.[43] Yamanaka also introduced the idea that this method opens an image up to multiple interpretations in the year before, in a text focusing on Dalí published in the *Nagoya Shimbun* (*Nagoya Newspapers*) in 1936.[44] There, he established how the working of the method could be seen in both Dalí's film and painting and could be read about in his recent articles, such as 'The Tragic Myth of Millet's *L'Angelus*' (1932-1933). Therefore, it is in 'Rotting Donkey' that the impact of

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[42] For example, writing in the *Atelier* in 1931 Koga Harue notes how in its unique relation to reality, Surrealism offers a mechanism for exploration of the unconscious, as per: Koga, Harue ([1931] 1986). Chōgenjitsushugi shikan [*Une Approache du Surréalisme*]. In: Centre Georges Pompidou (ed.), *Japon des Avant Gardes*, *1910-1970*: *Exposition* (Exh. Cat.). Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou**,** p. 159.

[43] Dalí, Salvador ([1930] 1937). Kusatta Roba [Rotting Donkey]. Translated by Yamanaka Chirū. *Mizue*, No. 394, pp. 13-16.

[44] Yamanaka Chirū ([1936] 1999). Furansu kaiga no zen'ei, Sarubadoru Dari no ichi [French Avant-Garde Painting, Position of Salvador Dalí]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 348.

paranoia-criticism on Surrealist photographers in Japan should be looked for, as it finally establishes the difference between Takiguchi and Sakata. As Roger Rothman's recent analysis of the text has shown, it not only reflected Dalí's understanding of paranoia but also revealed his preference of surface (of painting) to depth (of poetry) devised in the notion of *simulacrum*, thus separating the visual from the textual and inducing Breton's and therefore Takiguchi's criticism.[45] For Dalí, the notion of *simulacrum* aimed to show how representation could not only show reality but also undermine it, and was defined as 'corrosive' and thus embraced by the young Surrealist photographers in Japan seeking the means for politically effective action in the domain of visual culture.[46] Rothman proposes that 'Rotting Donkey' should be read as a catalogue of Dalí's five different types of images emerging from the 'corrosive simulacra': the paranoiac image, the double image, the repulsive *simulacrum*, the solidified desire, and the gratuitous point.[47] The paranoiac image assumes the role of appearance, applying precision and objectivity to confuse the systems of signification, and would thus be in tune with the practice of Osaka photographers, interested in staged photography.[48] The double image is a different version of the former, and makes use of precision and objectivity to point at a completely different object to that seen, and can also be identified in the practice of Osaka photographers, interested in substituting objects and showing landscape views for the body.[49] It is the repulsive *simulacrum* that Rothman identifies as 'terrifying', and which uses blood, excrement and putrefaction in order to confuse a difference between the self and the other, that becomes problematic for both Yamanaka and Takiguchi.[50] They disapprove of

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[45] The word first appears in *La femme visible*, a collection of four essays published in 1930. For a reading of their use of simulacra see: Rothman, Roger (2012), p. 129.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid, p. 130.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, p. 131. Rothman points out how Dalí himself left this type of image fairly unexplained and uses David Lomas's analysis of Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection to draw this conclusion. For how this discussion developed with regard to Dalí's illustrations for Comte De Lautréamont's *Le Chants de Maldoror* (1934) see: Lomas, David (2000). *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis*, *Subjectivity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 163-164. A sample of Dalí's illustrations of the volume was shown at the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*, together with *The Lugubrious Game* (1929).

depictions of ‘dirty’ or ‘unhealthy’ things for fear of provoking state censorship, whereas an interest in this type of imagery can be seen in Sakata’s experiments with Dalí’s ‘edible’ beauty. The solidified desire, a three-dimensional object extruded from the mind is a type of natural object Shimozato preferred in the development of the ‘camera’s automatism’.[51] Finally, the gratuitous point, which ‘begins as a material object only to end up as a mental image’, is pointed out as a method practiced by Abe.[52] Whereas their preferences remain individual, they can all be understood to draw their inspiration from Dalí’s well-know call to ‘systemise confusion and contribute to the total discredit of the world of reality’.[53] Whereas their heterogeneous approaches to Dalí’s call will be subsumed by their individual positions within their minor historical assemblage, a shared interest would also manifest in a focused exploration of the marginal and insignificant, argued by Rothman as the main focus of Dalí’s work. Whereas for Dalí, the interest would materialise in the application of a detail as a subversive element of the surface in painting, for the practitioners of a minor history of Surrealist photography in Japan it would be explored as having central importance. The specific use of Dalí’s paranoia-criticism was aimed at affirming their own marginalised position as amateur photographers against better-recognised professional practitioners. However, it can also be implicitly read as an affirmation of their minor historical status with regard to all major practices of photography developing in the 1930s.

Objects in close-up and in isolation

Regardless of the popularity of the Surrealist object experiments in Japan among amateur photographers, especially after the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*, there were a small number of actual objects produced by

[51] Rothman, Roger (2012), p. 131.
[52] Ibid, p. 132.
[53] Dalí, Salvador ([1930] 1998). *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*. Translated and Edited by Haim Finkelstein. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 223.

Japanese artists at the time. Several exceptions, however, were seen in the first exhibition of a newly formed 'Record of Wounds' Art Association (*Sōki Bijutsu Kyōkai*) consisting of nineteen members assembled from different art collectives to form the 'purest Surrealist group in Japan'.[54]

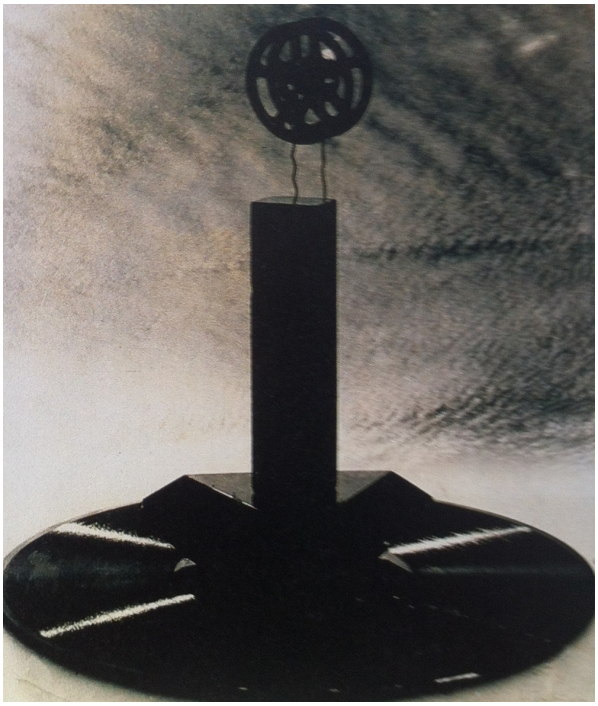

Figure 6.1: Abe Yoshifumi, *Working at Night*, 1938.

The only exhibition of the Association was held in Kyoto in July 1938 and also showed objects made in response to a theme of 'Fire' proposed by Takiguchi. These included an object by Tsuchiya Yukio and its photographic rendition by Abe entitled *Working at Night* (*Yakan sakugyō*) (Figure 6.1). Takiguchi reported from the exhibition for the *Mizue*, with photographs and an afterword submitted by Abe.[55] Images of the exhibited objects that are seen in the text were all accredited to Abe, and for Takiguchi the very fact that they were photographs reflected on the relationship between photography and objects.[56]

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[54] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990), p. 145.
[55] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1990). Kazari mado no aru tenrankai [Certain Exhibition with a Show Window Potential]. In: Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, pp. 148-149.
[56] For how Takiguchi asserted that he would only like to bring forth an example of the relationship as seen in Eugène Atget's photographs of mannequins and shop windows see: Ibid, p. 149. A reference to Atget's photographs is also indicated in the title of the report.

In the afterword, Abe reasserted Takiguchi's view that photographs of objects are different from objects themselves and exemplified this by his collaboration with Tsuchiya, whose object became interpreted by the light and the camera lens after it was photographed. In the text, he revealed the final image to be a collage: the object, which includes a wide base holding a vertical pole upon which a round shaped wheel-like part is seen attached by two strings, reminded Abe of clouds. Tsuchiya asked him to include this association in the image and he chose an existing photograph of clouds from his collection and used it for the background.[57] Displacing a close-up of the object against a view of the sky, Abe's final photograph thus achieves a complete defamiliarisation of its use or size, as we are given no indication of its original context or dimensions. By fairly simple tools of the photographic close-up and an unrelated background, a possibly insignificantly small object is thus isolated from its context in reality and foregrounded as of central importance.

As Dawn Ades has pointed out, whereas photographs of the existing Surrealist objects could enhance their effect, the photo-objects that are created *by* photography depend upon the special effects of close-up and magnification that 'disturb rather than reveal nature'.[58] This difference is pointed out by Takiguchi and can be seen in Abe's rendition of Tsuchiya's object. However, the final impact of Abe's photo-object is also achieved in the choice of an unrelated and allusive background. In its approach, *Working at Night* thus evokes the 'Involuntary Sculptures', a feature produced by Dalí and Brassaï for the magazine *Minotaur*e (1933) in which Brassaï photographed objects presented by Dalí to the Surrealist object experiment sessions, also using close-up and ambiguous background to intensify their effect.[59] As Simon Baker has pointed out with regard to this feature, 'these small-scale close-ups of even smaller objects depend not on enlargement *per se* but on

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[57] Ibid. The size of Abe's photograph was 48.4 x 40.7 cm and thus substantially large for the time.
[58] Ades, Dawn (2008). Little Things: Close-Up in Photo and Film 1839-1963. In: Ades, Dawn and Baker, Simon (eds.), *Close-Up: Proximity and Defamiliarization in Art, Film and Photography* (Exh. Cat.). Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, p. 52.
[59] Dalí, Salvador and Brassaï ([1933] 1981). Sculptures Involontaires. *Minotaure*, Nos. 3-4, Paris: Editions Albert Skira, p. 68.

alienating effects of proximity to an alien landscape of dust and detritus'.[60] The same application of close-up as a means of defamiliarisation of objects, combined with the use of alien landscape as a tool for isolating objects from their signification in reality was not only seen in *Working at Night* but also informed many Surrealist photographs produced in Japan throughout 1939. Featureless plane, distant horizon and grey sky, all frequenting Dalí's (and Arp's) painting were also used towards the same end.[61] As Simon O'Sullivan has noted, the isolation of objects plays a strategic part in art production as a method for breaking away from the use of images in which they are mobilised for a certain, mostly commercial end.[62] An object thus isolated from its habitual mode of circulation is rendered inoperative in terms of its assigned position within the capitalist relations of exchange.[63] Whereas the isolation is achieved in formal terms by the use of close-up and ambiguous backgrounds it should thus be also understood as pointing to a wider political climate prevailing in that year.

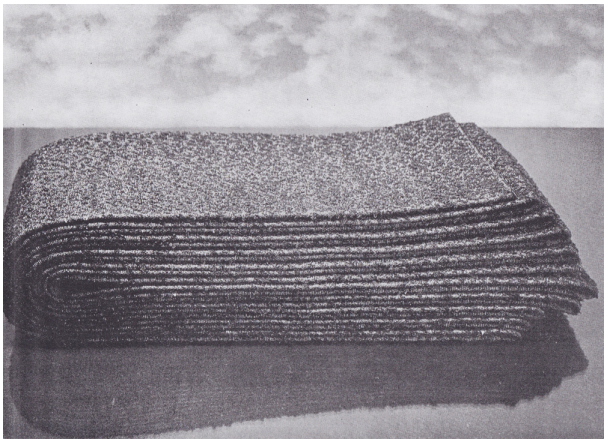

Figure 6.2: Abe Yoshifumi, *Flow*, 1939.

[60] Baker, Simon (2008). Watch Out for Life: The Conceptual Close-Up 1920-1960. In: Ades, Dawn and Baker, Simon (eds.), *Close-Up: Proximity and Defamiliarization in Art, Film and Photography* (Exh. Cat.). Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery, p. 94.
[61] For such features of Dalí's painting see: Rothman, Roger (2012), p. 66.
[62] O'Sullivan, Simon (2012). From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Towards a Minor Art Practice?. In: Bleyen, Mieke (ed.), *Minor Photography: Connecting Deleuze and Guattari to Photography Theory*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p. 9.
[63] Ibid.

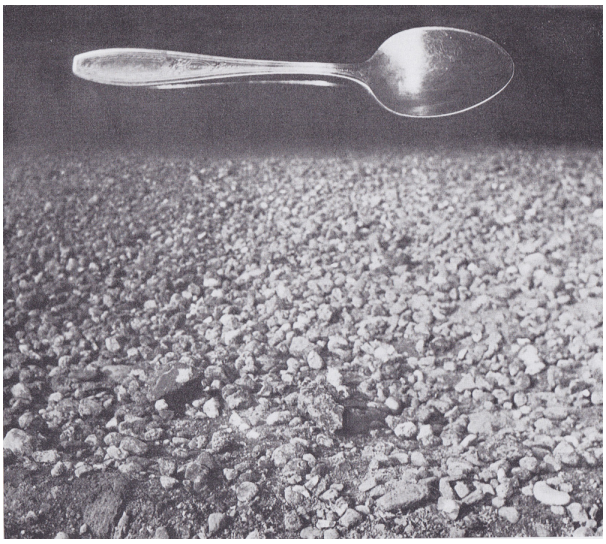

Figure 6.3: Shimozato Yoshio, *The Ninth Continent*, 1939.

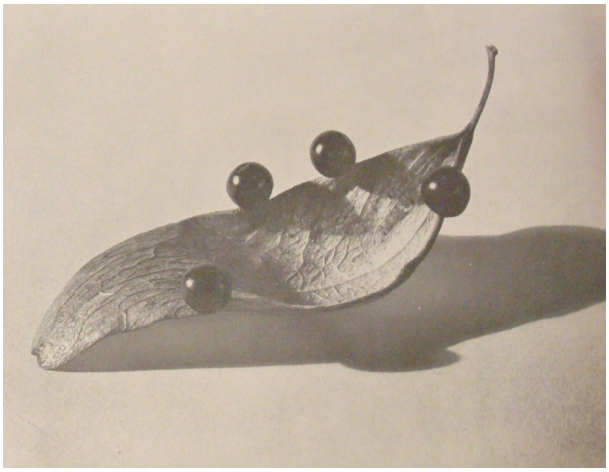

Figure 6.4: Imai Shigeru, *Still Life*, 1939.

For instance, the February 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* included Abe's photograph titled *Flow* (*Nagare*) (Figure 6.2). It shows several pieces of cloth folded together so as to indicate a flow of water, placed within a nondescript landscape and evoking in atmosphere the earlier *Working at Night*. Abe referred in the explanatory note to Jean Cocteau, to say: 'A poet does not dream. He calculates'.[64] Nevertheless, it is primarily in application of a close-up and the choice of a background that the 'calculated' effect of the image is achieved. Another photograph using the same approach is seen in the April issue of the magazine in Shimozato's submission, entitled *The Ninth*

[64] Abe Yoshifumi (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 2, unpaginated.

Continent (*Daikyū dairiku ni te*) and showing a metal spoon in close-up suspended above the ground (Figure 6.3). In the accompanying note, Shimozato explained the world portrayed as if existing 'inside a Magritte painting'.[65] The explanation of this image in the accompanying note would still maintain a reference to its Surrealist origin, whereas Takiguchi's comment of Imai Shigeru's *Still Life* (*Seibutsu*) seen in the August volume of the magazine would only highlight how its humorous effect was achieved in application of a close-up (Figure 6.4).[66] The image shows a single pea shell whose improbability is suggested in the arrangement of several seeds on its edges, and also uses close-up and obliteration of the background to give primacy to a small and insignificant object.

These photographs thus attest to a joint interest in the application of close-up and allusive background so as to achieve an isolation and defamiliarisation of objects but they also reveal an interest in showing them in a certain movement. Abe's allusion to a 'flow' indicates a flow of water in its formal appearance but also evokes the economical and political flows in which the object would assume its meaning. The folding of cloth onto itself, however, suggests a suspension of movement and trapping of the flow. A similar suspension is suggested in Shimozato's rendition of a spoon above an alien ground, whereas in the case of Imai it reappears as a suspension of peas seen on the edges of the shell, grounded by the shadow in which it reflects on the surface of an obsolete background. Based on an interest in Dalí's and Arp's painting and applying the approach of 'Involuntary Sculptures', these images would thus also reflect on a similarly suspended, ambiguous and uncertain position of the Japanese intellectual world in 1939 as to that of the

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[65] Shimozato Yoshio (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 4, unpaginated. For an example of writing about Magritte at the time, see: Takiguchi Shūzō (1939). Rene Maguritto [René Magritte]. *Mizue*, No. 414, pp. 4-8.

[66] Imai Shigeru (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 8, unpaginated. For a comment how Takiguchi's view in the accompanying notes of the volume was uninterested in the fact that the image would reflect the 'overflowing' of Japanese photography with a 'Surrealist world' see: Takeba Jō (ed.) (2001). *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 614.

term ‘plasticity’.[67] For O’Sullivan, however, the isolation of objects, or in this case suspension, is not merely depicting conditions of the capitalist flow, but also works as a trigger point, used so as ‘to open up other incorporeal universes of value’.[68] In other words, as it demands participation from the viewer, it aims to infect a type of slowness, or stillness against the speed of contemporary life.[69] These photo-objects thus produce their aimed effect to establish a relationship with the viewer, relying on the premise that they not only communicate a suspension of their own condition but that of the society as a whole that produces it.

Another prominent characteristic of these images, however, is an attempt to assign relevance to insignificant objects such as a cloth, a spoon or a pea shell, whereas their final effect would also be achieved by the use of titles. The problem of scale was already stressed in Shimozato’s *Mesemb Genus*, where the isolating of the formal characteristics of the Mesemb cacti was achieved by the same application of close-up and nondescript background, but where a cactus was also seen as larger than a house in the opening images on both sides of the album. Whereas for Shimozato the reversal of scale would be accomplished by the application of the paranoiac-critical method, and as much as Dalí would show the same fascination for both small and insignificant details as well as for the close-up, such use of objects shows a departure from what Dalí described as the working of the method, at least in terms of photography.[70] In ‘Non-Euclidian Psychology of Photography’ (1935) Dalí applies the method to discuss a threadless spool (*la bobine sans fil*) seen in the bottom corner of a vernacular photograph as a means to break away from its singular reading and affirm the camera’s objectivity in showing the

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[67] For how ‘a bleak vision of inner loss, anxiety, and groundlessness was shared by most Japanese intellectuals of the time, regardless of their ideological differences’ see: Iida, Yumiko (2002). *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 43.
[68] O’Sullivan, Simon (2012), p. 10.
[69] Ibid, pp. 6-7.
[70] For how Takiguchi insisted in his May address that the potential of close-up came to the modernist photographers in Japan through its application in cinema, including *Andalusian Dog* (1929) and Man Ray’s films see: Takiguchi Shūzō (1939), p. 93. For how the script for *Andalusian Dog* was translated in Japanese and published in 1930 in the *Shi to Shiron* see: Ōtani Shōgō (ed.) (2003). *Dreams of Horizon: Fantastic Paintings in Japan 1935-1945* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, p. 26.

world as equally inhabited by both small and large things.[71] However, whereas in Dalí's analysis of the photograph the attention moves away from the centre to the 'stupid and insignificant' thing on the margin, in the *Mesemb Genus* and several other examples from 1939, such a thing assumes a position of central importance. The specific application of close-up and alien landscape thus remains closer to 'Involuntary Sculptures', as it is aimed at highlighting the ambiguity of the objects seen, their position in the system of signification and the social condition that they reflect. The photograph that mediates such an object, however, although producing an independent image, remains bound to it in its material quality. Nevertheless, whereas in most of the cases the object shown remained ambiguous, it also assumed a symbolic value at times, either by its implied meaning or by the position it was allocated in the photograph. Such use of an object can be seen in Abe's *Flow* and is worth exploring further in order to establish how the practice in 1939 developed from the previous year.

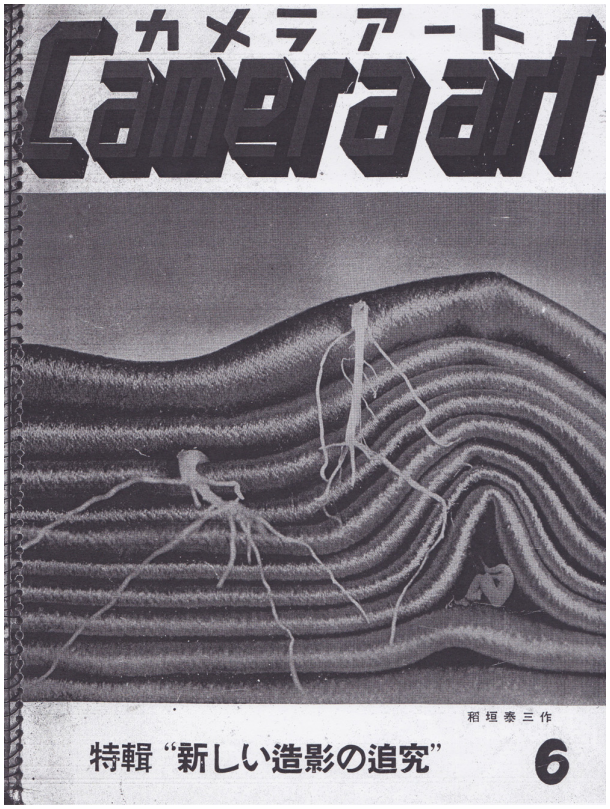

Figure 6.5: Inagaki Taizō, *Untitled*, *Kamera Āto*, June 1939, cover page.

[71] Rothman, Roger (2012), p. 108. As per: Dalí, Salvador ([1935] 1998), pp. 302-306.

For example, in Inagaki Taizō's untitled photograph featured on the cover of the *Kamera Āto* in June 1939, a close-up of similar folds to those seen in *Flow* is montaged with a female figure inserted between them (Figure 6.5). The image thus reads as a visualisation of Takiguchi's previous definition of Surrealist photography as revealing 'the beauty hidden in the deep folds of the everyday', whereas the crouched pose of the tiny female figure indicates that she might be hiding from whatever distress two elongated creatures seen in the foreground suggest. The photograph appears in a special volume dedicated to the 'new inquiry in plasticity' (*atarashii zōkei no tsuikyū*), announced underneath the photograph. The volume showed a strong alliance between the members of different clubs in the 'new inquiry', following Takiguchi's description of 'plasticity', and included submissions from Sakata, Shimozato and Tajima Tsugio from Nagoya but also Nagata from Tokyo and Takahashi Wataru from Fukuoka.

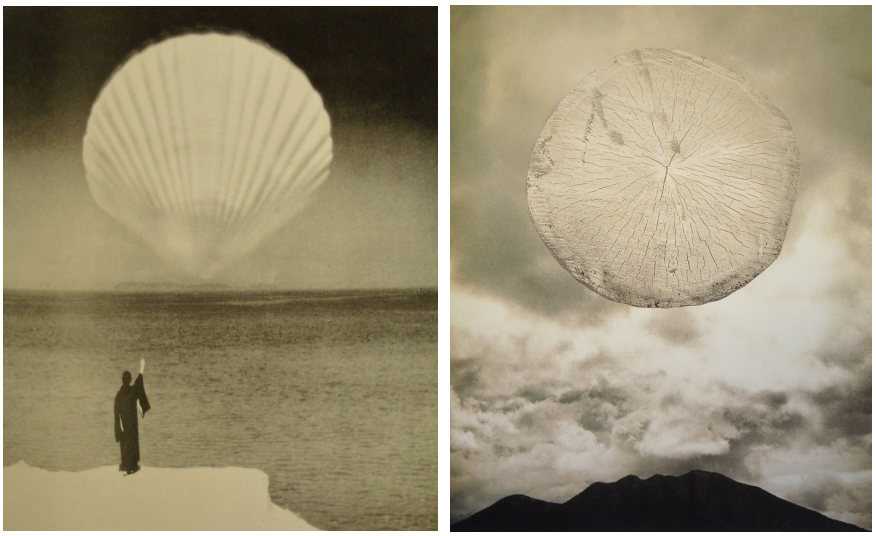

Figure 6.6: Takahashi Wataru, *Spirit of the Sea*, 1938.

Figure 6.7: Goto Keichirō, *Image of the Judgement Day*, 1935-1940.

Among these submissions, Takahashi's photographs showed a strong interest in the displacement of objects in a fantastical context and can be observed for the change in practice from 1938 through 1939. His earlier *Spirit of the Sea* (*Umi no sei*) showed his wife in a *kimono* dress standing on a seashore in Fukuoka with a hand rising to greet a magnified shell, seen against a

seascape (Figure 6.6).[72] Published in the June 1938 issue of the *Kameraman* it was accompanied by an article titled 'Two Impressions'.[73] The text was an elaboration of amateur photography's social value against professional photojournalism and claimed that artistic tendencies should be considered as equally relevant regardless of the fact that they originated in individual world-views.[74] Takahashi's comment expressed in 1938 developed not only in collaboration with Sakata, who is known to have visited Fukuoka on a regular basis throughout 1938 and 1939 to discuss Surrealist photography with artists such as Takahashi and Hisano Hisashi, but also in close relation to practitioners from Osaka and especially Yasui Nakaji, whose work most probably inspires the staged character of the photograph.[75] The reading that *Spirit of the Sea* thus implies is a celebration of amateur and artistic photography against the predominant photojournalism, as it reverses the scale of significance in ascribing a marginal object such as a seashell a position of central consideration in the image. However, the symbolic value of the enlarged shell can also be assessed against the relevance of the Sun in the collective Japanese imagination, as a symbol of the nation's mythical origin and a central feature of its national flag, referred to as the 'circle of the Sun' (*hi no maru*). The substitution of the 'circle' for an insignificant object, this time a tree trunk, is also seen in Goto Keiichirō's *Image of Last Judgement* (*Saigo no shinpan zu*) that delivers a landscape view in which it is shown suspended above a mountain (Figure 6.7). Goto's work developed in parallel to that of Yamamoto Kansuke's as he was a Nagoya-based photographer who remained distanced from the activities of the chief art and photography circles. Whereas Shimozato and Sakata would be considered as

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[72] For how this image was part of a series also including *Spirit of the Wind* and *Spirit of the Land* see: Kuwahara Kineo (et al.) (1986). *Nihon shashin zenshū 3: Kindai shashin no gunzō* [Complete Collection of Photography in Japan 3: Modern Photography Movement in Japan]. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, p. 124.
[73] Takahashi Wataru (1938). Tsū kansho [Two Impressions]. *Kameraman*, June Edition, pp. 24-25.
[74] Ibid, p. 25.
[75] For details about the exchange between the clubs in Osaka and Fukuoka see: Nakajima Norihiro (2004). Shashin no 'radikarusa' ['Radicalism' in Photography]. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha p. 243. See also: *Soshiete Irufu: kyōdo no zen'ei shashinkatachi* [*Avant-Garde Photographers in Fukuoka*: *Société Irf*] (1988) (Exh. Cat.). Fukuoka: Fukuoka-shi Bijutsukan, p. 4. Collaboration between Sakata and Fukuoka photographers is discussed in more detail in the following Chapter 7.

photographers working in the closest relation to Dalí's paranoia-criticism in Nagoya, Yamamoto's work would nevertheless also manifest significant knowledge and interest in the same method. Thus looking into his work is worth another digression, in order to establish what consequences such a photographic practice could entail in 1939.

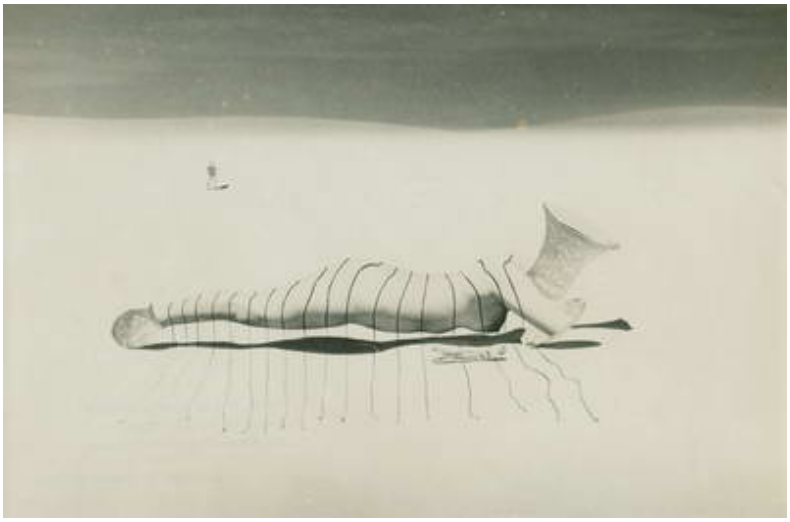

Figure 6.8: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Untitled*, 1938.

For instance, an untitled photograph by Yamamoto from 1938 shows a nude female figure in the foreground seen in profile while laid stomach down and appearing to be floating in air (Figure 6.8). The body is covered with strings that keep the body restrained whereas the feet are placed within a vase and the head is inserted in an object resembling a large ceramic jar. The arm disappears in a plate also floating in air whereas a fork and a knife are placed beside the figure and atop of the strings. The entire scene suggests that the body is served as a meal, where a male figure seen in the background of a deserted landscape either provides or consumes the site, rendered fantastical by the use of a nondescript landscape and where the 'edible' beauty of the female figure is foregrounded against the line of the horizon.

As John Solt has noted, Yamamoto's sense of politics was refined and was expressed by changing the Japanese characters in the writing of his name around the time of the intensification of the militarist operations in China in

1937.[76] His reversal of landscape views for the female body was a relevant point of reference for application of the paranoiac-critical method among photographers of the clubs in Osaka and Nagoya and his interest in Dalí's 'edible' beauty is further attested in this image.[77] His distancing from the production of the *Mesemb Genus* should be read against more invested efforts in the publishing of his own poetry magazine *The Night Fountain* (*Yoru no funsui*) in 1938 and 1939.[78] As the efforts led to his arrest and the suspension of the magazine by the police, it becomes clear how the production of images that would go as far as to reverse scales of objects on such a significant symbolic level so as to refer to the 'circle of the Sun' could only come from photographers on the very margins of the 'photography world' such as Takahashi and Goto.[79] Whereas their implied political criticism might have been tolerated in 1938, worsening of the political climate in 1939 would result in scrutiny of visual material that could be interpreted as subversive, following the purification of language for the words such as 'revolution' or 'avant-garde'.

In 1939, Takahashi thus developed a new series of landscape views, attuned to the ambiguous term of 'plasticity' and to the practice of applying photographic close-ups and allusive backgrounds to achieve displacements of

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[76] For how Yamamoto changed the Japanese characters in which his name was written (maintaining the same reading) so that it reads 'violent right', which would be 'accusing the violent right [wing] for politically ruining the country' see: Solt, John (2001). Perception, Misperception, Nonperception. In: Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.), *Yamamoto Kansuke: Conveyor of the Impossible* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo Station, p. 51.

[77] The composition of the scene is repeated in another untitled image from 1938, the only photograph that was published in Yamamoto Kansuke's Surrealist magazine *The Night Fountain* (*Yoru no funsui*), and accompanying Yamanaka Chirū's translation of Paul Éluard's letter, as per: Yamamoto Kansuke ([1938] 2001). Yamanaka Chirū yaky, Pōru Eriyuāru saigo no tegami ni yoseta shashin [A Photograph Accompanying 'The Last Letter from Paul Éluard', Translated by Yamanaka Chirū]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 286. For how Yamamoto's technique is described as using 'an exaggerated perspective by placing diminutive people in the far distance to create a sense of mystery' see: Solt, John (2001), p. 35. For how 'eroticism of woman and the landscape as nude', together with the use of background that 'bends dimensions in a surreal way' are motifs repeated in Yamamoto's work see: Ibid.

[78] For all issues of this magazine, whose publication was suspended by the police in 1939, see: Tsuruoka Yoshihisa and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2009). *Korekushon, Toshi modanizumu shishi 3*, *Shūrurearisumu* [Collection: Poetry and Illustration of Urban Modernity, Volume 3: Surrealism]. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō.

[79] For how one of the questions Yamamoto was asked during the police interrogation was 'How does your surreal photography aid Japan's war efforts?' see: Solt, John (2001), p. 53.

objects and thus reflect on the suspension of critical thought among intellectuals of the time.

Figure 6.9: Takahashi Wataru, *"___"*, 1939.

Figure 6.10: Takahashi Wataru, *Untitled*, 1939.

Takahashi's photograph seen in the June edition of the *Kamera Āto* is titled with a straight line and shows a chair together with two tree branches within a deserted landscape (Figure 6.9). Another untitled photograph featured in the October issue of the *Foto Taimusu* only shows five stones in the foreground placed in a similarly emptied space, with a small cloud seen in the upper right corner (Figure 6.10). As Ōtani Shōgō has suggested, an important feature of the Surrealist landscape was its use of the horizon, functioning as a 'passage' between the conscious and the unconscious mind.[80] The role of fantasy in such images would be to enable materialisation of the unconscious thought in reality, providing it with a concrete space. Exploration of the horizon under such terms is evident in Yamamoto's *Untitled*, where its line is also utilised as a landmark for determining the scale of things, what is seen in the foreground and background of the image, or what is considered large and small. In a move from full landscape views to a focus on the object from 1938 to 1939, a clear line of the horizon also offered a praxis against which the objects are affirmed, as it remains the only stable reference point in the images emptied

[80] Ōtani Shōgō (ed.) (2003), p. 21. For such a reading of Dalí's painting see: Malt, Johanna (2004). *Surrealist Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 180-189.

of any substance or material that would reveal their context in reality. In Takahashi's photographs produced in 1939, the line of the horizon gradually disappears, revealing another transformative process in which suspension becomes more accentuated. The idea of space is abandoned, in order to give way to a complete simulacra and sever its ties with the real, very much in accordance with Dalí's own preference for the surface.

The investment into practice that Takiguchi and Sakata were to define as 'plastic' can be established as taking strong roots in all of the main centres of Surrealist photography in Nagoya, Tokyo and Fukuoka, following the same interest among Osaka photographers. It was characterised by the production of Surrealist objects, placed within the nondescript and thus fantastical landscapes, and foregrounding small objects or ascribing them with symbolic value. Whereas Hanawa Gingo would have already noted a joint interest in the Surrealist object in all the main amateur clubs of the time in 1938, the main preoccupation in 1939 becomes a reversal of positions of significance, mainly in the attempt to affirm their own amateur practice. That the implications of such a reversal would entail political criticism is evident in Takahashi's and Goto's images. However, in 1939 it becomes further reterritorialised into portrayals of objects devoid of any context and often seen in a suspended movement and thus reflective of an increasingly oppressive political climate. In such circumstances, a possibility that an object-photograph could effect and thus possibly change reality, as suggested by Sakata, became a matter of great urgency, especially as voicing of critical opinions was no longer allowed in language.

'Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process'

Takiguchi's introduction of 'plasticity' as a new framework for Surrealist photography and a significant strand of photographic practice in the late 1930s insisted on how poetry rather than painting was to be considered its more suitable ally, especially as Dalí's work was understood as a 'contagious

disease' in the eyes of authority. Also, it recognised abstraction as of especial importance to Japanese photographers, due to formal abilities it offered for the delivery of visually coded material. Finally, it approved of the technological premises of photography, as it was becoming recognised as an independent form of art practice. A new work produced by Sakata in 1939, whose texts and photographs would place him at the forefront of the newly coined framework, brought forward all of these characteristics. Prior to examining this work in detail and looking at how it reflects on the discrepancy between the clubs in Nagoya and Tokyo with regard to Dalí's paranoia-criticism, as well as how it reflects the use of close-up and alien background in many of the other photographs produced in the same year, there are two things that should be noted. Firstly, how his work developed in relation to the previous elaboration of 'photo-abstraction' and 'photo-surrealism' and secondly, how it was contextualised by Yamanaka, the chief art critic in the Nagoya club.

Development of Sakata's new project in 1939 followed immediately after his work with Shimozato on the *Mesemb Genus* but emerged also from his interest in delivering 'plastic' and abstract properties of photography in the communication of a poetic Surrealist content. An earlier 'Photo-Abstraction and Photo-Surrealism' established this interest as based on the technical properties of photography. Four photographs that Sakata produced as part of the second instalment of this text are compiled in the article as a series *Spherical Object in the Age of Senility* (*Rōsui-ki ni aru kyūmen-tai*) and are titled *Civilisation* (*Sibirizēshon*), *Ignorance* (*Igunoransu*), *Final Night*, *Inflamed Pleasure* (*Saigo no yoru*, *tadareta kanraku*) and *Decadence* (*Taihai*).[81] The project is dated September 1937, and is accompanied by four poems composed by Yamanaka. The complex titling of the images and the entire series places them in relation to the significance of Freudian theory for Surrealist photography in Nagoya, described in the first part of the article, and offers a comment on the 'infancy' he ascribed to the 'photography world' of the time in the same instalment. However, the entire project is situated in this

[81] Sakata Minoru ([1938] 2001). Fotoabustrakushon to Fotoshuruurearizumu [Photo Abstraction and Photo Surrealism]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 122-129.

specific volume in relation to Breton's *Page-Object* (referred to as *Buttai-pēji*, 1934), also included at the end of the text.[82] Sakata subtitled Breton's work as a 'marriage between literature and plasticity' and thus established it as an inspiration for his and Yamanaka's project, which he described as a 'marriage between verse and photography'.[83] Breton's page-object is composed from a poem-object placed atop a page from *Nadja* but is delivered through a photograph. Therefore, Sakata and Yamanaka attest to the same aspiration at delivering an effect of an object through 'plasticity', or material quality of photography, which assumes an equal role in the relation forged between the image and the text in Breton's page-object, whereas it is a page of the magazine that delivers it.

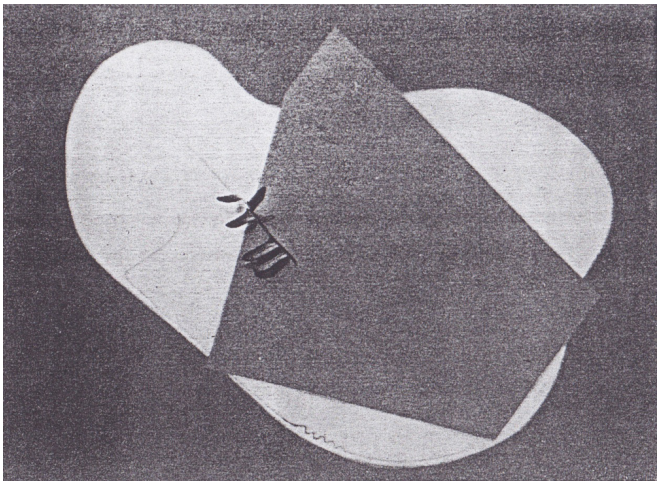

Figure 6.11: Sakata Minoru, *Ignorance*, 1937.

Sakata indicates that one of the photographs from the series, a composite of two abstracted cut outs and a flower-like object placed on top of them titled *Ignorance* is such a 'photo-object' (*foto obuje*) in the accompanying note, whereas the same photograph is used in the previous instalment to illustrate 'photo abstraction' under the title *Ignorant* (*Igunoranuto*) (Figure 6.11).[84] Such

[82] Ibid, p. 127.
[83] Breton's *Page-Object* (*Page-Objet*, 1934) was featured under this title in the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works.* Sakata uses a poetic term for photography as a 'picture of light' (*kōga*) established in an earlier photography magazine of the same title but also containing the suffix *ga* used in the word for 'painting' (*kai-ga*) so as to indicate artistic use of photography, as *shiku to kōga no kekkon*, as per: Ibid, p. 126. For Sakata's description of Breton's object as *bungaku to zōkei no kekkon* see the closing of the text, as per: Ibid, p. 129.
[84] Ibid, p. 127.

an inconsistency in Sakata's article attests to an incoherence of his argument behind 'photo-abstraction' developing in 1937, as it moves from reference to the 'new' photography practitioners in the first instalment to the photo objects in the second. However, it also reveals his early interest in delivering the 'plastic' quality of the Surrealist object in photography, through abstraction and in relation to poetry. This interest develops after his move to Nagoya and prior to his work on Shimozato's project, in which the paranoiac-critical method was affirmed as the main means through which it was to be delivered.[85] The spherical character suggested in the title of the series, the formalist abstraction of the background collage and the use of a small object as the means of delivering of a poetic juxtaposition are important elements of this image and would keep reappearing throughout Sakata's work. As much as assigning a small object the central place of consideration would be indebted to Dalí, the use of an abstracted and collaged background shows his alignment with Shimozato's identification of Arp's practice as of decisive importance for the application of abstraction in terms of photography's 'plasticity', and capability for delivery of Surrealist content. Dalí himself would affirm the concept, referring to it as the 'extra-plastic' quality in both 'Surrealist Object' (1931) and 'Concerning the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Art Nouveau Architecture' (1933). However, it was Arp who would define abstraction as the externalisation of subjective thought processes in material form, and thus put into practice what Steven Harris refers to as the 'plasticism Dalí had in mind'.[86] Finally, the reference to a spherical character of the series, to which Sakata would return in formalist terms, should also be regarded from the perspective of Alberto Giacometti's work, whose *Suspended Ball* (1930-

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[85] In the third instalment of the article Sakata commented how Breton had recently celebrated Dalí's paranoiac-critical method as offering photography a possibility to deliver paradoxical content, as per: Ibid, p. 131. The remaining four photographs in the second volume are part of an earlier project, dated July 1934 and published under a joint title of *Nocturne* (*Nokutān*). Inspired by a performance of the music piece by a Japanese violinist, they were separately titled as *Intrada*, *Espressivo*, *Appasionato* and *Finale*. In the first part of 'Basic Explanation of Surrealist Photography and Abstraction' Sakata reflected how his interest in abstraction developed around 1934 in a series of submissions to the Naniwa Photo Club exhibition (titled from 'A' to 'H') but that at that time he did not have any background in theoretical understanding of abstraction, as per: Sakata Minoru ([1939] 2001), p. 351.

[86] Harris, Steven (2012). Voluntary and Involuntary Sculpture. In: Dezeuze, Anna and Kelly, Julia (eds.), *Found Sculpture and Photography from Surrealism to Contemporary Art*. Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 23-24.

1931) was published in connection with Dalí's 'Surrealist Objects' in the December 1931 issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* and was included in Dalí's text as an example of 'objects with a symbolical function'.[87] Whereas the combination of both interests in (Arp's) abstraction and (Dalí's) paranoia will make the basis for Shimozato's formulation of 'Neo-Surrealism', Sakata would extend it with an exploration of (Giacometti's) 'plasticism', affirming an equal interest in photography's materiality, form and content as a chief premise in his later project in 1939.[88]

Following this early interest, which established the theoretical premises for the later development of Sakata's practice, Yamanaka foregrounded its particular relation to the 'poetic essence' at the beginning of 1939. His text on Sakata's work published in the *Shashin Saron* in January defined the relationship between Surrealism and photography both in terms of poetic expression and the technical properties of the photographic process.[89] In this text, Yamanaka advanced his insistence on the poetic potential of 'avant-garde' photography that would not stand for 'poetry like' practice but rather deliver a poetic impression in images themselves, through exploration of objects.[90]

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[87] For further discussion of this relation see: Fer, Briony (et al.) (1993). *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 224.
[88] Images of both Arp's and Giacometti's work were included in the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works*. Sakata's interest in 'spherical' form can be best considered against two photographs by Max Ernst *Le Jardin de Alberto Giacometti a Maloja après le passage de Max Ernst* (1935), showing various round stone sculptures scattered around Gicometti's garden in Maloja, as per: *Kaigai chōgenjitsushugi sakuhinshū: Album Surréaliste* [Collection of Foreign Surrealist Works: Surrealist Album] (1937). *Mizue*, Special Edition, No. 388, Catalogue nos. 39-40, unpaginated.
[89] Yamanaka Chirū ([1939] 1999). Sakata Minoru sakuhin ni tsuite [Sakata Minoru's Artworks]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanaka Chirū, 1930-nendai no oruganaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 428-431.
[90] At this point the 'avant-garde' frame is still maintained, with Yamanaka establishing Sakata's work to be neither Surrealist nor abstract but delivering both impressions to the viewer, as per: Ibid, pp. 428-429.

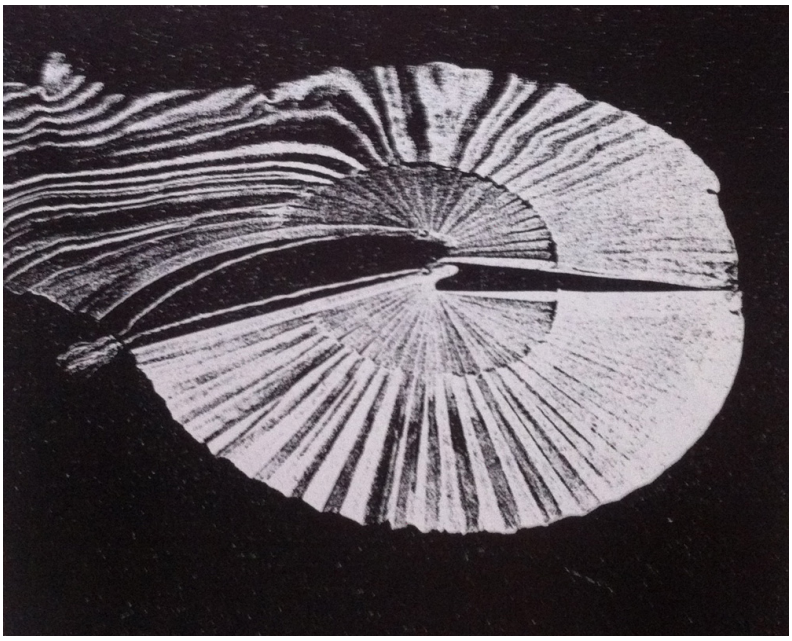

Figure 6.12: Sakata Minoru, *Flowing Eyeball*, 1939.

He highly valued Sakata's achievement of this goal, discussing four images published in the text, including the *Flowing Eyeball* (*Medama ga nagareru*) (Figure 6.12). In this photograph, Sakata uses a single shot of an open fan to produce a montage that invokes a 'flowing' eye, its pupil formed in the crossover of the semi-round shape of the fan's base when combined with a reverse, mirror image of itself. The effect of flowing is achieved in the folds of the fan whereas the eye is suggested by manipulating one of the images in the dark room so as to curve the ending upwards. To Yamanaka, a poetic impression of the object was achieved using purely photographic 'tricks', alluding to montage and manipulation of the print. To him, such technological 'trickery' was a necessary tool required of photography if it wanted to appropriate and continue the poetic heritage of Surrealist and abstract painting in its 'avant-garde' claim.[91] Thus Yamanaka recognises the technological ability immanent in photography to deliver Surrealist content outside of the application of Surrealist photo-collage, and his recognition of

[91] To Yamanaka, a similar 'poetic' quality was equally important for avant-garde literature, painting and all other art forms. Photography was differentiated from Surrealist or abstract painting due to its mechanical predisposition and therefore needed to make use of it if it wished to appropriate them in its practice, as per: Ibid, pp. 429-430. Yamanaka stressed in the opening of the article how those photographers who would like to practise Surrealism should 'love their cameras more', as per: Ibid, p. 428.

Sakata's practice under such terms is also resonant with the later Takiguchi's definition of 'plasticity'. Both critics thus agree that the poetic quality of Surrealist photography can be successfully delivered through the technical properties of the photographic medium, affirming the development of the practice throughout the decade and thus overcoming their previous differences towards the best suitable means for the use of photography in Surrealism.

The positive view of photographic technology as a means of delivering Surrealist content would thus become the main purpose of Sakata's new work, published in 'Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process' in the *Foto Taimusu* in a series of three instalments, in April, May and July of 1939.[92] All three instalments described different steps for the affirmation of the photographic technology as a means of delivering an abstract but more scientific approach to Dalí's paranoiac-critical method, making use of the new term of 'plasticity' to render the materiality of the Surrealist object in photography as capable of making an impact in reality. In this project, Sakata's main aim was to make clear how photography is 'more than technology', in an attempt to establish its value as an art practice.[93] Such an aim was argued by Sakata through examples of his own recent work, with each of more than twenty photographs discussed in detail, both with regard to their possible interpretations and technical specifications. The format of all three instalments was to show photographs on the first two pages, and then describe and analyse them one by one in the subsequent text with images also listed in numbers, continuing across all sections of the article.

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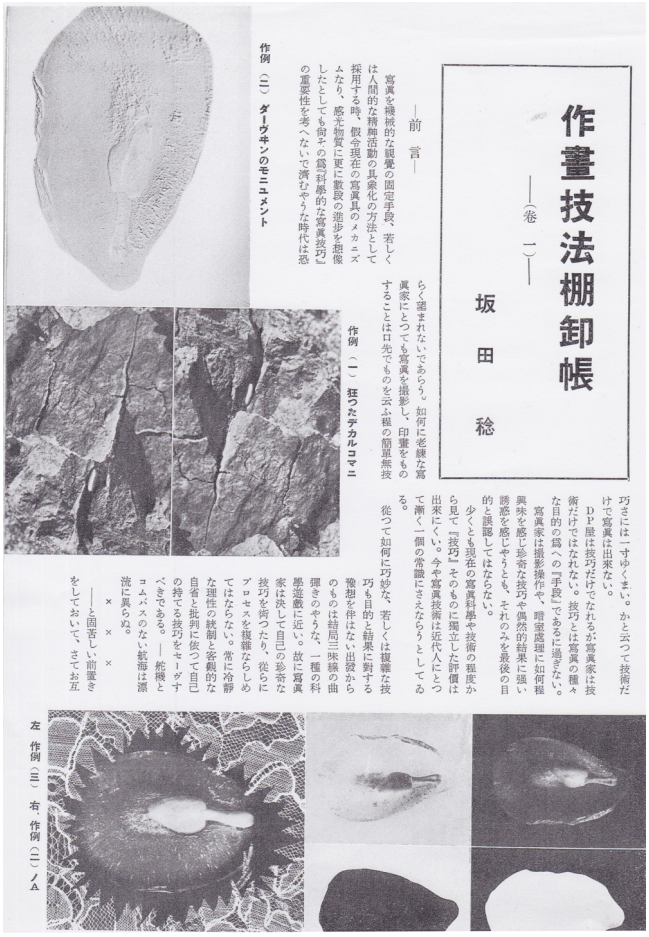
[92] Sakata Minoru (1939, 1). Sakuga gihō tanaoroshi chō [Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 71-76. Sakata Minoru (1939, 2). Sakuga gihō tanaoroshi chō [Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 55-60. Sakata Minoru (1939, 3). Sakuga gihō tanaoroshi chō [Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 7, pp. 41-44.
[93] As per: Sakata Minoru (1939, 1), p. 71. See also: Sakata Minoru (1939, 2), p. 55.


作畫技法棚卸帳

——(卷 一)——

坂田稔

—前言—

寫眞を機械的な視覺の固定手段、若しくは人間的な精神活動の具象化の方法として採用する時、假令現在の寫眞のメカニズムなり、感光物質に數段の進歩を想像したとしても何その儘『科學的な寫眞技巧』の重要性を考へないで濟むやうな時代は恐らく遠されないであらう。如何に老練な寫眞家にとつても寫眞を撮影し、印畫をものすることは口先でものを云ふ程の簡單無技巧さには一寸ゆくまい。かと云つて技術だけで寫眞は出來ない。

DP屋は技巧だけでなれるが寫眞家は技術だけではなれない。技巧とは寫眞の種々な目的の爲への『手段』であるに過ぎない。

寫眞家は撮影操作や、暗室處理に如何程興味を感じ珍奇な技巧や偶然的結果に强い誘惑を感じやうとも、それのみを最後の目的と誤認してはならない。

少くとも現在の寫眞科學や技術の程度から見て『技巧』そのものに獨立した評價は出來にくい。今や寫眞技術は近代人にとつて漸く一個の常識にさえならうとしてゐる。

從つて如何に巧妙な、若しくは複雜な技巧も目的と結果に對する觀想を伴はない出發からのものは結局三次線の曲線のやうな、一種の科學遊戲に近い。故に寫眞家は決して自己の珍奇な技巧を術つたり、從らにプロセスを複雜ならしめてはならない。常に冷靜な理性の統制と客觀的な自省と批判に依つて自己の持てる技巧をセーヴすべきである。——舵機とコムパスのない航海は漂流に異らぬ。

× × ×

——と固苦しい前置きをしておいて、さてお互

作例（一）狂つたデカルコマニ

作例（二）ダーヴヰンのモニュメント

左 作例（三）右 作例（二）ノA

Figure 6.13: Sakata Minoru, ‘Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process’, *Foto Taimusu*, April 1939, detail.

The first example shows a combination of two close-up photographs of stones, seen in the middle of the first page, and is titled *Mad Decalcomania* (*Kurutta dekarukomani*) (Figure 6.13). These photographs were described as examples of natural objects that communicate a Freudian content, contained in an erotic excitement that he felt while taking them.[94] The second example, a close-up of a tree seed seen in the upper left corner of the page, is titled *Darwin’s Monument* (*Daawin no monyumento*) and was explained as allegorical and paranoiac.[95] This image is connected to the third example as its variation, a photomontage showing an assemblage of the manipulated original photograph of a tree seed with a piece of cut lace shaped as a

[94] Sakata Minoru (1939, 1), p. 73.
[95] Ibid.

sunflower, seen in the bottom of the page and already published in the *Kamera Kurabu* in January 1939 under the same title.[96]

At the Nagoya meeting, Sakata referred to *Darwin's Monument* to explain how although it showed a Moon-like shape in a photograph of a tree seed, to him the Moon actually stood for the soul, a delicate and precious essence he wished to portray.[97] The images on the first page, therefore, provide a wider context for *Darwin's Monument* as it was seen in the *Kamera Kurabu*, tracing back Sakata's interest in close-up views of natural objects and showing the entire process in which it was produced. In Yamanaka's terms, this may be seen as revealing the 'trickery' involved in the production of Sakata's photographs, as they would have been manipulated in the dark room and montaged with a shot of the cut lace to achieve their final effect. To Sakata, however, the particular image was of specific relevance as it used a close-up of a very small object.[98] The monumentality suggested in the title thus assigns importance to a seed of a tree in the Darwinian chain of evolution whereas the framing of the object as a 'shade of a soul' evokes its 'poetic essence'. In Sakata's final construction of this photograph, the poetic essence of the 'Moon', connected to an eroticism of a natural object, is placed in the centre of the 'Sun', showing how they would be inseparably inter-related with each other. Sakata's referencing of the 'circle of the Sun', in terms of the formal characteristics of *Flowing Eyeball* and through poetic elaboration of *Darwin's Monument* would resonate with his comment about the symbol, also made at the Nagoya meeting, where he brought it up in the discussion to point out how certain things could have an abstract potential outside of their specific material and local contexts.[99] Therefore, his use of the motif, although possibly a deliberate exploration of and a commentary upon its symbolism, is abstracted on the level of his primary interest to affirm a position of insignificance, and thus implicitly amateur photographers, as equally relevant.

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[96] Sakata Minoru (1939). *Kamera Kurabu*, Vol. 4, No, 1, p. 40. The image is dated November 14, 1938 with materials used that of a persimmon seed and cut lace.
[97] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai [Round Table Meeting Rethinking Avant-Garde Photography] (1939). *Kameraman*, February Edition, p. 29.
[98] Sakata Minoru (1939, 1), p. 71.
[99] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai (1939), p. 20.

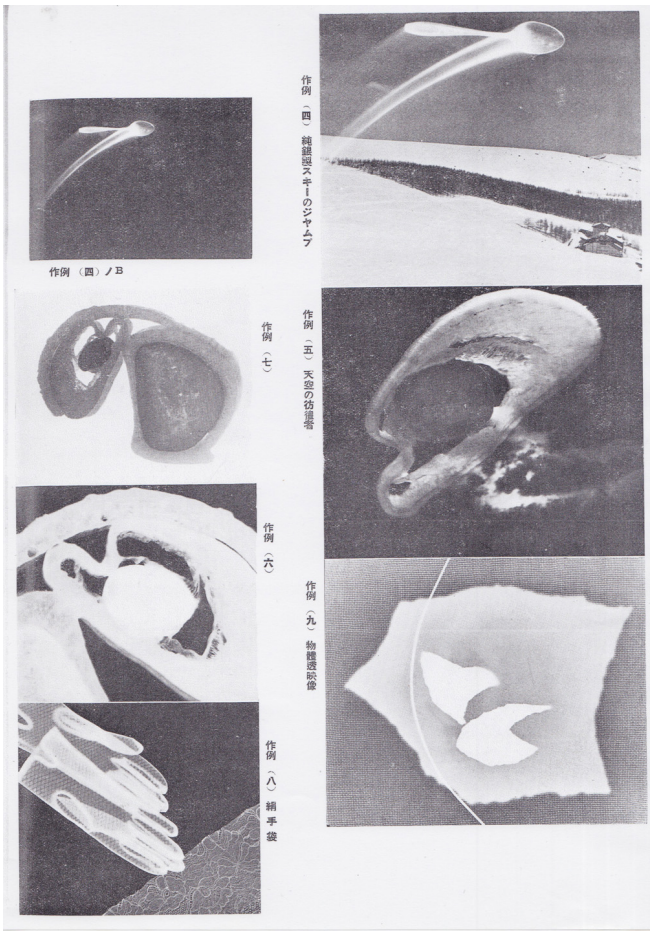

Figure 6.14: Sakata Minoru, 'Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process', *Foto Taimusu*, April 1939, detail.

The problem of scale, as of central interest in the application of paranoiac-critical method in the *Mesemb Genus*, and affirmed as of significant interest in different photographic practices in the country, is reasserted in Sakata's feature in both *Darwin's Monument* and in the following image. The fourth example, seen in two variations at the top of the second page and titled *Ski Jump of Pure Silver* (*Junginkei sukii no jamupu*) was explained as a photograph of scenery that he first imagined (Figure 6.14). He said that it went without saying how a montage of an ordinary silver spoon seen in an alleged ski jump above a snowy landscape with a house below was produced using the paranoiac-critical method.[100] Similarly to the opening image of the *Mesemb Genus*, the spoon is rendered larger than a house and was seen in Shimozato's *The Ninth Continent* in the same magazine issue.

[100] Sakata Minoru (1939, 1), p. 74.

The remaining five images in this part of the article are only explained from a technical point of view. However, referencing Dalí's paranoiac-critical method in delivery of the feature is also achieved in its layout, as most of the images grouped on the second page show close-ups of small objects isolated from their original use by magnification and the use of nondescript backgrounds. Such 'inventory' of Sakata's recent practice is thus reminiscent of 'Involuntary Sculptures', as the images in the feature were similarly shown alongside each other and on a single page. In Sakata's case, however, defamiliarisation of objects is also achieved by detailed technical elaboration of the process of photographing, in an aspiration to establish a scientific methodology to his application of abstraction in delivery of paranoia-criticism. As both an encounter with an object and an artistic process of intervention and control were immanent in the Surrealist objects, Sakata stresses the latter as of particular importance in their photographic renditions, assigning equal importance to all parts of the process from which the final image results.[101] In this, he develops his practice in close relation to Yamanaka's call for technical 'trickery' to be applied in photography's claim to a Surrealist, poetic essence. However, whereas such intertwining of the poetic Surrealist content and the 'plastic' potential of the photographic print (and the magazine through which it was delivered) would be already agreed on between Sakata and Yamanaka in their previous collaborative project, Breton was known not to have been overly supportive of 'Involuntary Sculptures'. Although they remained expressions of unconscious thought processes, their existence was divorced from language and became what Dalí would term 'concrete irrationality'.[102] In other words, whereas Takiguchi would seek a type of a poetic image that would reclaim surreality in reality in close alliance with Breton, Yamanaka's view of photography, developing through collaboration with Sakata, approves the type of images that would affect it in their plastic quality.[103] Whereas both Takiguchi and Abe would make clear how objects and photographs are

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[101] For a description of the Surrealist object in these terms see: Dezeuze, Anna and Kelly, Julia (2012). Introduction. In: Dezeuze, Anna and Kelly, Julia (eds.), *Found Sculpture and Photography from Surrealism to Contemporary Art*. Burlington: Ashgate, p. 5.
[102] Harris, Steven (2012), p. 17.
[103] For how the feature only appeared in the magazine due to Éluard's praise see: Ibid, pp. 14-15.

different entities, and whereas most of the photographs produced throughout the year would remain dependant on objects portrayed for delivery of their materiality, Sakata develops his project alongside Yamanaka so as to attempt to produce a photo-object with a distinct, corrosive 'plasticity'.

The specific layout reminiscent of 'Involuntary Sculptures' is maintained in the May issue, with the title numbers continuing from the previous instalment (repeating numbers seven, eight and nine with different examples). In this volume, his effort to establish the artistic qualities of photography was proposed on the basis of combining the 'Geometrical and Non-Geometrical Photo-Plastic' with the psychological and abstract qualities of photography.[104] The first element of the particular definition takes its cue from Alfred Barr's chart drawn for the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition in the newly opened Museum of Modern Art in New York (1936), which Sakata included in Japanese translation in the first instalment of 'Basic Explanation of Surrealist Photography and Photo-Abstraction'.[105] In the chart, the latest art practices are divided into 'non geometrical abstract art' and 'geometrical abstract art', with Surrealism included in the first, whereas Sakata indicates how 'photo-plastic' applies to both. However, the second part of the definition draws from his previous interest in abstraction, as it makes an equally relevant claim of importance for photography's materiality ('plasticity'), content (psychological quality) and form (abstraction). That he finds the need to reaffirm his already existing interest with regard to Barr's chart is aimed to elevate it to the level of not only a photographic but also an artistic aspiration.

[104] Sakata Minoru (1939, 2), p. 57. 'Photo plastic' is this time translated in Japanese as *shashin zōkeijutsu*.
[105] Sakata Minoru ([1939] 2001), p. 353.

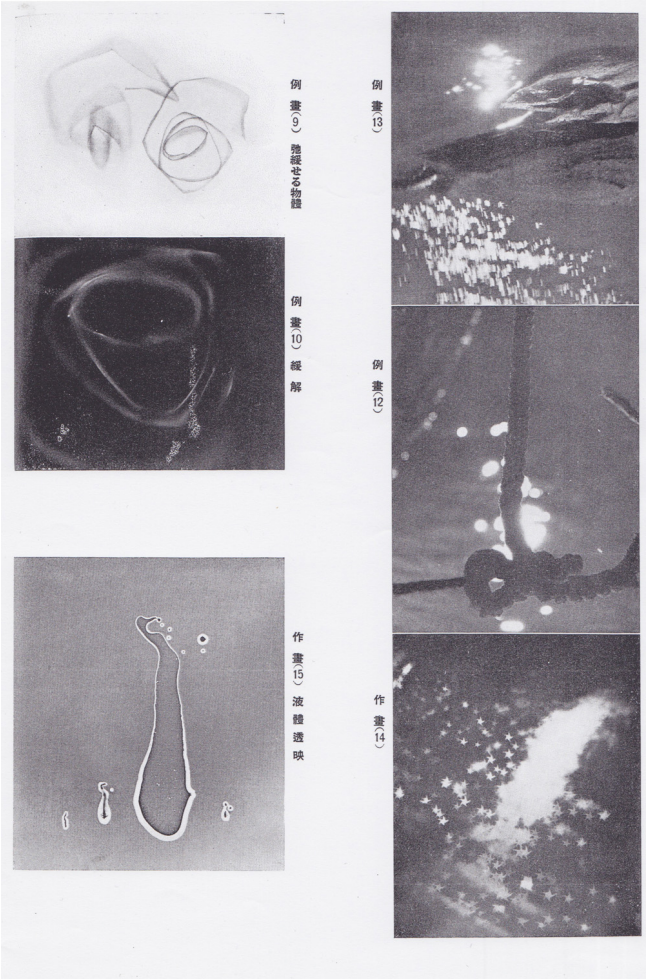

Figure 6.15: Sakata Minoru, ‘Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process’, *Foto Taimusu*, May 1939, detail.

In this part, Sakata only referred to the Surrealist origin of the images in terms of the paranoiac-critical method for achievement of an ‘abnormal’ erotic content in the example numbered nine, seen in the top left corner of the second page (Figure 6.15). Regardless of such a departure from the first instalment, the focus on small and insignificant objects delivered in both close-up and manipulation of the negatives is sustained, thus revealing abstraction as aiming to primarily obscure the chain of their signification in reality.

What is most at stake for Sakata is affirming photography’s existence as both an image and an object and that he uses abstraction to achieve this goal is

considered intrinsic to its application in the medium.[106] As Matthew Witkovsky has pointed out, the primary role of the use of abstraction in photography is to provoke perceptual unrest and instability, as images become representations of *no thing*.[107] Whereas it is the paranoiac-critical method that enables Sakata to justify his focus on small objects, unlike other photographers of the time, he departs from the materiality of the object photographed and seeks in the 'plasticity' of photography the means to communicate materiality of an object. An interest in producing photographs that would thus become objects themselves also emerges from his previous work with Yamanaka and in relation to Breton's *Page-Object*.

In his study of abstract photography, Lyle Rexer has identified two modes intrinsic to the practice, which he described as ultimately refusing to 'disclose fully the images they contain'.[108] Rexer explained how the first mode 'accentuates camera's own data-gathering capabilities to frame unfamiliar view of recognizable or at least stable object' and is thus close to defamiliarisation achieved through close-up framing, as most famously featured in Karl Blossfeldt's photographs.[109] Whereas this mode would be used by most of the other photographers, Sakata's work can be seen as belonging to the second, in which photographers intervene in any stage of the process of photographing to 'produce objects that often bear little visual relation to any antecedent in reality'.[110] This is a radical form of abstraction, as it produces 'objects defined by their concrete, material existence, referring to nothing outside themselves'.[111] The second category of abstract photography goes beyond a narrow understanding of abstraction as functioning on formalist level only and, as in Sakata's case it is also informed by Giacometti

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[106] For a definition of abstract photography as both an image and an object see: Witkovsky, Matthew (2010). Another History. *Artforum International*, Vol. 48, No.7, p. 215.
[107] Ibid, p. 217.
[108] Rexer, Lyle (2009). *The Edge of Vision: the Rise of Abstraction in Photography*. New York: Aperture, p. 9.
[109] Ibid, p. 19.
[110] Ibid, p. 20.
[111] Ibid, p. 11. For how the experimental work of Japanese photographers during the 1930s (including Sakata Minoru, Otono Sutezo and Nakayama Iwata) is described as not adequately acknowledged in histories of photography and as 'a key chapter in the story of modernism' see: Ibid, pp. 81-82.

and Arp, requires a recognition that it also includes a specific materiality.[112] Whereas Sakata would achieve transcendence of the formal abstraction in the May volume, the following instalment would complete the project by migrating it fully into the domain of technical manipulation of negatives in the process of development.

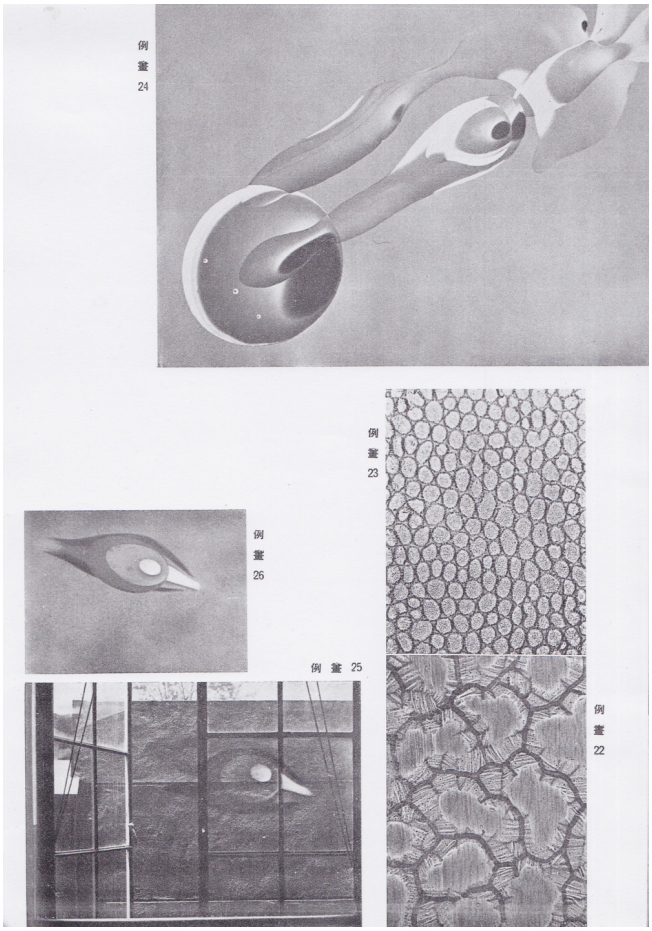

Figure 6.16: Sakata Minoru, 'Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process', *Foto Taimusu*, July 1939, detail.

In the July instalment, although the shortest, and mostly discussing photographs from the point of view of their technical specifications, the final images in the article show the final stage in delivery of Sakata's new

[112] For how a solution to this issue might be a term 'concrete photography' see: Jäger, Gottfried (2007). From Generative Toward Concrete Photography. The University of Nottingham [Online]. Available to access: http://www.gottfried-jaeger-archiv.de/aktuell/aktuell/from-generative-toward-concrete-photography.html [Accessed on September 20, 2013]. For how Arp also preferred the term 'concretion' to 'abstraction' in this sense see: Harris, Steven (2012), p. 23.

project.[113] A sequence of three images, one numbered twenty-four and titled *Transparent Hand* (*Tōmei no te*) together with photographs numbered as twenty-five and twenty-six and taking a joint caption *Window Watchman* (*Mado no kanshisha*), is seen on the second page from the top to the bottom left (Figure 6.16). Sakata explained that the first photograph was produced by playing with waterglass in the development process and how he only fixed what appeared as interesting while working, without any previous intent.[114] However, in the following two images, he isolated a detail emerging in the experiment and montaged it with an existing photograph of a window so as to achieve its complete transformation. The final photograph thus not only showed an object defamiliarised from reality but only existing inside the technical domain of the photographic process, an image produced from an image. Starting from the paranoiac-critical method, which allowed him to reverse scales of importance between the small and the large, he used abstraction to disturb any point of reference in reality for the original object, and finally manipulated the negative so as to metamorphose it into a new material domain. Sakata's interest in both formal and material abstraction thus opened the door to not only showing an object in a photograph but also evolving a photograph into an object, and this is why he embraces 'plasticity'.

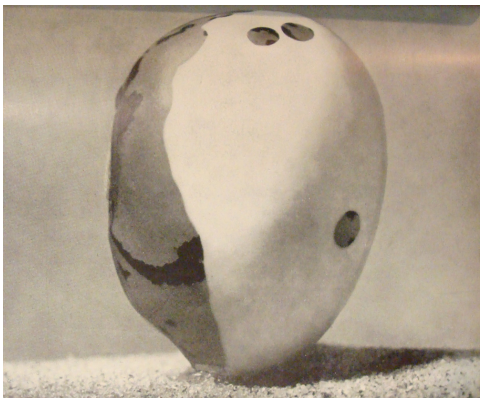

Figure 6.17: Sakata Minoru, *Parage*, 1939.

Figure 6.18: Sakata Minoru, *Sphere*, 1939.

[113] Sakata described as a point of departure a situation in which contemporary photographers mostly relied on technicians to develop their prints whereas to him all phases of photography making were of equal relevance, similarly to painting, as per: Sakata Minoru (1939, 3), p. 43.
[114] Sakata's submission to the June 1939 special issue of the *Kamera Āto* was another image resulting from this experiment, as it is indicated in its title referring to the waterglass.

The possibility for the application of this method is seen in two other images he submitted to the same magazine in the following months. In *Parage*, titled in French and published in August, we see that the same experiment with waterglass is now rendered to resemble flowers (Figure 6.17). *Sphere* (*Kyūtai ni tsuite*), a part of a series that Sakata submitted to the third exhibition of the Free Artists Association, included in the September issue of the magazine, was referred to in an accompanying note as a 'tiger bean' (*tora mame*), suggesting that this time it was a combination of an existing photograph of a bean that was montaged with another abstracted image produced in the waterglass experiments or that Sakata was photographing another experiment which included the object itself (Figure 6.18).[115] In both cases, the material quality of an object was intervened in by the means of photography.

Consistency of the focus on small spherical objects (such as a seed or a bean) is maintained to this point all the way from his early experiments in 1937, through all instalments of the 'Inventory Notebook' and separate examples of waterglass experiments published in different photographic magazines. Its aim is to achieve a 'total confusion' in reality in terms of what the object is and what an image of it is, as they merge into a single entity with the final aim to 'corrode' and undermine reality. Although all renditions of the waterglass experiments maintain the same formal qualities, Sakata does not reveal which negatives he is using but only refers to an aerial view of a 'non object' or a 'no thing' (*mutaishō*) in the July instalment of the 'Inventory'.[116] Although the insistence on no particular point of departure dematerialises the entire project, the images remain close to the earlier *Flowing Eyeball*, suggesting either an interest in simple design or the use of the earlier image's negative in the later experiments.

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[115] Sakata explained the image as 'D' from a series of six images from 'A' to 'E' but the inconsistency in the numbers and letters is not explained. Other images from the same series, held at the Nagoya City Museum of Art, include renditions of a round white object that might have been the original bean, as well as another version of this same image showing its reverse side, similarly covered in an abstract form of the same shades. The impressive size of all photographs from the series of approximately 50 x 60 cm attests further to the ambition of Sakata's project. I am grateful to Takeba Jō, curator of the Museum for showing these photographs to me during an interview on May 24, 2013.

[116] Sakata Minoru (1939, 3), p. 44.

With such intense production throughout the year, Sakata thus managed to turn the practice of Surrealist photography within the concept of 'plasticity' in his favour. Whereas the Surrealist object was first defamiliarised by simple photographic tools such as the close-up and the choice of background, this method required of photography to remain bound to the object photographed and dependent on it for the achievement of its materiality. Sakata would thus dematerialise it, reversing the process in which the object would emerge from development of the photographic negative. This process would blur the distinction between an object and a photograph or indicate the evolving of photography into a concrete, material and independent presence, not a representation of a 'no thing' but a 'no thing' in itself.

Such an advanced use of photography's technological features coincided with its acceptance as an established art form, achieved with its inclusion in the *National Exhibition* (*Kokuten*) in 1939.[117] Following their submissions to the annual exhibition of the Free Artists Association, both Sakata and Shimozato would be among the rare Japanese photographers featured in the *Mizue* in August 1939.[118] Their participation in an exhibition of a group mostly consisting of Surrealist artists should be seen as an attempt by the two to establish their positions in the art world of the time, making alliances among Surrealist painters of the group (also including those with a specific interest in photography such as Hasegawa Saburō and Ei-Kyū) for delivery of the project that they started developing together since the preceding year. The importance of such integration was especially made clear by Shimozato in 'Thoughts of a Photo Amateur', published in the *Kamera Āto* in June 1939.[119]

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[117] The exhibition is an annual show that still takes place up to this day in the national museums of art. For a report of the exhibition see: Nakada Sadanosuke (1939). Kokuten no shashin [Photography at the National Exhibition]. *Mizue*, No. 415, p. 16. According to the text, the total number of submitted photographs amounted to thirty-nine and a significant number of them were 'surreal' (*shūru*), with a note that this did not mean that the show supported 'dilettantism'. Photographs by Nojima Jasuzō, Nakayama Iwata, Matsubara Jūzō and Hanaya Kinbei accompany the text as full-page illustrations.

[118] Their respective images would be published at the beginning and the end of the feature, also as full-page illustrations, as per: *Mizue* (1939). No 416, unpaginated. Shimozato's image seen in the volume is titled *Psychological Figure* (*Seiriteki zukei*) whereas Sakata's image is another rendition of the *Sphere*.

[119] Shimozato Yoshio ([1939] 2001). Foto amachua kō [Thoughts of a Photo Amateur]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio,*

In this text, he explained his frustration with the fact that those photographers who were interested in photography as an art practice were considered 'dilettantes' within the 'photography world' and looked down on as amateurs by the so-called professionals, primarily interested in photojournalism.[120]

Whereas the full implications of this comment will become clear in the following chapter, where the relationship with mainstream photojournalism will be further discussed, it is important to note that through the concept of 'plasticity' Sakata has in effect sought means of affirming Surrealist photography, conceptualised through his work with both Shimozato and Yamanaka, managing equally to foresee Takiguchi's recommendation of a more sustained scientific approach in the delivery of the paranoiac-critical method. Whereas Surrealist photography thus far would only be seen in photographic magazines or in annual exhibitions of different amateur clubs, their inclusion in the art circles and magazines came at the time of a complete ban on any subversive material, and thus required a shift of focus to abstraction and materiality. As Georges Didi-Huberman has pointed out, plasticity (of materials) always implies multiplicity (of functions) and thus such a shift forced Surrealist photography towards a more experimental, although equally uncertain and unstable position.[121] In other words, although the process Sakata developed in his new work in 1939 achieved the means of potentially impacting upon reality, the ambiguity of the final results, which did not disclose the images they contained, reterritorialised further their Surrealist content and intensified the essential ambiguity of the practice of 'plasticity'. This condition of the minor is described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as 'pushing deterritorialization to such an extreme that nothing remains but intensities'.[122] As another key notion in Deleuze's philosophical project, 'intensity' refers to affect in his understanding of aesthetics, and can thus be

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renzu no avangyarudo [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 284-285.

[120] Ibid, p. 284

[121] Didi-Huberman, Georges (2006). The Order of Materials: Plasticities, *Malises*, Survivals. In: Taylor, Brandon (ed.), *Sculpture and Psychoanalysis*. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, p. 199

[122] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix ([1975] 1986). *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 19.

seen as a type of sensation that Surrealist photography in Japan aimed to achieve in communication of its content to the viewership.[123] Whereas achieving the affect in 1939 would be enabled by the reformulation of the discourse from 'avant-garde' to 'plasticity', the latter would also be understood as primarily artistic, and thus another major practice.[124] The desire for a space from where Surrealist photography could act with a wider impact would thus also require a balancing between 'plasticity' and art, and such an undecided and multiple positioning would be another characteristic of its minor historical formation.[125] However experimental and radical both 'plastic' and art photography might have been in 1930s Japan, from the point of view of a minor history of Surrealist photography they still remain only major strands of practice against which it needs to be inscribed.

[123] For how 'intensity' can be remembered, imagined, thought and said, and for how 'although intensities are not entities, they are virtual yet real events whose mode of existence is to actualise themselves in states of affairs' see: Boundas, Constantin V. (2010). Intensity. In: Parr, Adrian (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 131.
[124] For how 'a definition of the minor will depend on a definition of the major' see: O'Sullivan, Simon (2006). *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 71.
[125] For how 'a minor art will connect different regimes together, and in particular will connect art to the wider social milieu' see: Ibid, p. 74.

Chapter 7

Reclaiming locality: Traditional aesthetics in a time of silence

By 1939, photography was established as an art form but also became a highly charged medium for its use in nationalist propaganda. Furthermore, whereas the predominant photojournalism was used as an instrument by the militarist regime in the internal and foreign politics, it shared the same means of circulation in the illustrated press with Surrealist photography.

This chapter looks into the close relationship between Surrealist photography and photojournalism in the years leading up to the Pacific War (1939-1940). It firstly establishes how photography became a politically-charged medium due to its exposure at the international expositions in the second half of the decade. It observes the intertwining of photojournalist and Surrealist practices through examples of Abe Yoshifumi's photographs. It also provides a close reading of the final project produced by the members of the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde in order to argue how it was delivered as a deliberate subversion of the nationalist ideology. Finally, it offers an insight into the 'cutting off' of any further possibility for a focused practice of Surrealist photography at the end of 1940.

Photojournalism and photomurals

The use of photography for the construction of nationalist ideology in the domain of visual culture in Japan during the 1930s had its specialised outlet in the magazine *NIPPON* (*Japan*), launched in 1934 by the members of the Japan Workshop (*Nippon Kōbō*) agency. The publication was aimed at a foreign readership, with international distribution and multilingual content, projecting the idea of an amiable Japan over the course of its running until 1944.[1] The magazine promoted a newly coined term *hōdō shashin*, essentially a translation of 'photojournalism', which connoted a socially engaged role of photography. Promoters of the practice included most of the photographers and critics previously engaged with the magazine *Kōga* such as Ina Nobuo and Kimura Ihei, who were exceedingly active in organising exhibitions and publishing special volumes on the subject, supported by the public agencies and industrial capital.[2] Whereas this magazine made use of photojournalism to promote Japan on the international stage, the same approach was deployed in a widely popular national *Shashin Shūhō*, which was published from 1938 through to1944 and employed the same photographers from the Japan Workshop agency. Some of the most prominent features of the magazine included beautified views of the Japanese colonies and a glorification of everyday rural life in Japan. Even the occupied colony of Manchukao published a photographic magazine *Manshū Graph* (*Pictorial Manchuria*), which was established in 1932 for propaganda purposes.[3] The 'photojournalist turn' within the photographic discourse of the 1930s was wrapped in wider cultural, political and economic shifts in operation at the time, aspiring to a universal language it was allegedly

[1] For the status of *NIPPON* as an exhibition space or a 'museum', inviting a 'foreign gaze' see: Weisenfeld, Gennifer (2000). Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Japanese Imperial Travelogues. *positions: east asia culture critique*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 747-793 .
[2] Ibid, pp. 752-754.
[3] Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.) (2003). *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, Conn.: London: Yale University Press, p. 381.

communicating.[4] The process can be understood as a part of a representational project in which 'instrumental realism' was utilised as a technique of social diagnosis and control, in its ultimate ambition to help give concrete form to history.[5] The narrative, in the guise of photojournalistic photographic discourse, mythified military expansion of the nation-state on the continent as not only ethically but aesthetically justified. As it was socially engaged and politically serviceable, photojournalism became the most recognised and established form of practice in 1930s Japan.

However, during the booming years of 'new' photography through to the later half of the decade, photography was not only popularised in the domain of the illustrated press but also in public spaces, in production of large-scale photomurals. After this practice was established in the commercial spaces of large urban centres in the country, photomurals became an intrinsic part of the national pavilions and were thus exhibited at the international expositions, in Paris in 1937, San Francisco in 1939 and New York in 1939-1940. These photomurals were commissioned from the members of the Japan Workshop by the Society for International Cultural Relations and were sponsored by the largest national bodies.[6]

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[4] For how 'photography is *not* an independent or autonomous language system, but depends on larger discursive conditions' see: Sekula, Allan (1981). Traffic in Photographs. *Art Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 16.

[5] For further discussion on such use of photography see: Ibid, pp. 16-21.

[6] The practice itself was not specific to Japan, as most of the national pavilions adopted the use of photomurals after the Paris International Exposition in 1937. This was due to the impact of G.R. Lawrence's display for the automobile company Ford in the 1933 exposition in Chicago, an impressive set of photographs more than six meters in height that were displayed around a circular hall, 182 meters in length, as per: Naomichi Kawahata (2010). The Photomural Age - Discussion Focused on the Japanese Exhibits at the Paris International Exposition 1937 and the New York World's Fair 1939-1940. In: Omuka Toshiharu (ed.), *'Teikoku' to bijutsu: 1930-nendai Nihon no taigai bijutsu* senryaku ['Imperial Japan' and Art: Japanese Art of the 1930s and its Strategic Expansion Abroad]. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, p. 388.

Figure 7.1: Kuwabara Kineo, *Restaurant in Tokyo, Ginza Yonchome District*, 1936.

The first photomural in Japan, three metres by four-and-a-half meters in size was produced by Horino Masao as a part of the interior design at the second floor of the Morinaga candy shop, a confectionery established in Tokyo's Ginza district in October 1935 and can be seen in Kuwabara Kineo's photograph *Restaurant in Tokyo, Ginza Yonchome District* (Figure 7.1). It was composed of five different images of a Spanish flamenco dancer, Manuela Del Rio, who was visiting Japan at the time.[7] The photomural was an extension of Horino's well-established practice in which he had developed a special format of presenting his work in the illustrated press, referred to as 'graph-montage'.[8] The method evolved from his regular submissions to the *Hanzai Kagaku* (*Criminal Science*) in 1931 and 1932, a popular monthly especially designed for the lower city intelligentsia that was publishing news of a criminal, bizarre and erotic nature.[9] As these features explored the graphic

[7] Ibid, p.394.
[8] Horino Masao (1932). Gurafu montaju ni tsuite [Graph-Montage]. *Kōga*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 64-68.
[9] Boeder, Titus (2007). *Japanese Photography from the Pre-War Period: Photobooks & Prints*. London: Maggs Bros, p. 81. The subject matter of these features, all published in montage across several introductory pages, included 'People Living in Asakusa' portraying city beggars, prostitutes and people from the fringes of society, as per *Hanzai Kagaku* (1931). Year 2, No. 6, unpaginated. Another feature was titled 'Fade In, Fade Out' and focused on the night life of the city including catch phrases such as 'mystery', 'drama' and 'nonsense', as per: *Hanzai Kagaku* (1932). Year 3, No. 4, unpaginated. The features were published at the beginning of each volume and introduced as 'graph-montage' in the table of contents. For a part of this series see: Horino Masao (et al.) (2012). *Maboroshi no modenisuto: shashinka*

potential for the application of montage, they had a large impact on the future development of the illustrated press. This development resulted in the fact that the photographic magazines of the *Shashin Shūhō* type were often referred to as 'graph magazines' (*gurafu zasshi*). The photomural thus migrated the graphic application of montage from the illustrated press into public space, merging photography with everyday city culture and raising the level of commercial recognition that the radical approaches to photography could receive. The immense popularity of this first photomural established a measure against which the subsequent productions of similar works were to be evaluated, including an established position in the 'photography world' as well as a radical approach to practice. Those photographers developing their artistic aspirations in relation to Surrealism within 'new' photography such as Nakayama Iwata and Koishi Kiyoshi were considered such examples of radicalism and were not excluded from subsequent commercial and state commissions.

Figure 7.2: Daimaru Department Store, 'Tea Room' Display, Kobe, 1936.

Horino Masao no sekai [*Vision of the Modernist: the Universe of Photography of Horino Masao*] (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Kokusaho Kankōkai. For how the 'graph-montage' developed in relation to Horino's feature from the October 1931 issue of the *Chuo Koron* magazine and as it demonstrated a close relationship between the graphic design and text it evoked Moholy-Nagy's 'type-photo' see: Kaneko Ryūichi (2003). Gurafu montaju no seiritsu: Hanzai Kagaku shi wo chūshin ni [Establishment of Graph-Montage: Focusing on *Hanzai Kagaku* Magazine]. In: Omuka Toshiharu and Wada Hirofumi (eds.), *Modanizumu, nashonarizumu, 1930-nendai nihon no geijutsu* [Modernism, Nationalism: Japanese Art in the 1930s]. Tokyo: Serika Shobō, pp. 156-177.

Nakayama, who was among the best established photographers in the Kansai region due to his wide experience abroad during the 1920s, was thus put in charge of a photographic display at a newly opened 'tea room', located in an extension of the Daimaru department store opened in Kobe in 1936. For the display, Nakayama chose a cropped view of his earlier photogram *Sea Fantasy* (*Umi no fantajii*, 1935) and a Surrealist collage produced by Murota Kurazō, an advertising magazine editor and designer who studied in France.[10] In a reproduction of the display, the latter is seen as showing a photo-collage, including a close-up view of a statue head in the foreground and a female model looking up towards a butterfly (Figure 7.2).[11] Such an explicitly Surrealist display constructed by Nakayama, who was also known as a frequent visitor to the cabaret revues and entertainment establishments of the city, affirmed a possibility that the photographers associated with Surrealism could also take on assignments of commercial and public relevance. When it thus came to a selection of the photographic team for the production of photomurals that were to be shown at the international exposition in Paris in 1937, Koishi also joined the Japan Workshop photographers: Kimura Ihei, Watanabe Yoshio and Hara Hiromu. The choice took place regardless of the fact that Koishi was considered as one of the most advanced photographers of the new generation and criticised for his Surrealism-related radical imagery produced in montage by the members of the same agency only several years before. The team of four photographers produced three photomurals over a course of a single month, attesting to a hurried planning process behind preparations for the exposition.[12] The method selected was again that of montage, and the photomurals were constructed from varied individual photographs of the team members. These photographs were also used in an accompanying photobook *Nippon* (*Japan*), which was also titled in French as

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[10] The size of the individual prints is unknown but Naomichi estimates they must have been around two-and-a-half square meters. Both prints were sponsored by Oriental, the same company that published the *Foto Taimusu* and supported the production of photomurals for the Paris exposition, as per: Naomichi Kawahata (2010), pp. 397-399.

[11] The same butterfly motif was frequently used by both Yasui Nakaji and Nakayama but also by a Surrealist painter Migishi Kotarō, as per: Mitsuda Yuri (2004). Yasui Nakaji riarusa no hate - shashin ōgonki no kyojin [Yasui Nakaji, the End of Reality - Giant of Photography's Golden Age]. In: Yasui Nakaji (et al.), *Yasui Nakaji shashinshū* [*Nakaji Yasui Photographer 1903-1942*]. Tokyo: Kyōdo Tsūshinsha, pp. 15-16.

[12] Naomichi Kawahata (2010), p. 408.

Japon, Vue panoramique and distributed at the site and among the sponsors of the pavilion. In 1937, photomurals scheduled for the Paris exposition between May and October were also seen in Tokyo in February, only several months before the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works.*[13] Photographers assigned with the task of producing the photomurals would be allocated proportionally significant space in the illustrated press, including the *Foto Taimusu*. For example, the July 1938 issue of the magazine promoted the album *Nippon*, reprinting its entire content across six pages. The subject matters of the montages, seen in the volume across double-sided panorama plates, included beautified views of Japanese landscape and traditional arts as well as modern urban culture, but also celebrated the strength of the Japanese army and politics.[14] However, the same magazine would simultaneously publish both Nagata Ishhū's 'My Work, Particularly Nerval's *Dreams and Life'* and Abe Yoshifumi's 'A Study in Avant-Garde Direction', which did not only discuss Surrealist photography under the still tolerable notion of 'avant-garde' but also included radical imagery to accompany their individual arguments.

The production of photomurals and Japan's participation in the Paris exposition was widely publicised and criticised due to the substantial costs invested in the construction of the pavilion. By 1939, it was recognised how the commission required a closer collaboration between the architects and photographers, together with coordination of the objects displayed at the site. Therefore, the following displays in New York and Chicago in 1939 and 1940 were assigned to the Bauhaus-trained Iwao Yamawaki, whereas the main role in charge of the production of photomurals was assigned to a rising star of photojournalism Domon Ken, together with the other Japan Workshop photographers: Watanabe and Kanamaru Shigane.[15] These expositions were seen by a record number of visitors that amounted to forty-four million people

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[13] Ishii Ayako (et al.) (1999). *Nihon no shashinka 15: Koishi Kiyoshi to zen'ei shashin* [Complete Collection of Japanese Photographers 15: Koishi Kiyoshi and Avant-Garde Photography]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, p. 68.
[14] *Nippon* [Japan] (1937). Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai.
[15] Naomichi Kawahata (2010), p. 446.

over the two seasons of display in 1939 and 1940.[16] However, regardless of the fact that the artists involved in the production of the pavilion were more established in the public domain, their participation in the propaganda efforts was not entirely uncritical. For example, in a comment about a photograph of a plane that would later be included in the exposition published in the March 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, Domon explained how it was awkward to him that such a shot, taken without much thinking and that to him invoked a strange feeling of solitude he was experiencing on the day, should become a national emblem in propaganda working for the exposition.[17] Regardless of the coordinated efforts invested in the production of a more sustained pavilion, the situation in which the reproductions of the photomurals would be published in the press alongside Surrealist photographs also continued.

Figure 7.3: Furukawa Narutoshi, 'Dedicated to Eternal Peace and Friendship Between America and Japan', *Foto Taimusu*, March 1939, detail.

[16] Gold, John Robert and Gold, Margaret M. (2005). *Cities of Culture: Staging International Festivals and the Urban Agenda, 1851-2000*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, p. 97. After the exhibition closed, arsonists destroyed the Japanese pavilion in protest of the attack on Pearl Harbour that took place in the following December, as per: Ibid, p. 101.
[17] Domon Ken (1939). Puropaganda [Propaganda]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 11. Domon explained how the image of a plane was taken during a shoot on Haneda airport during which he was assisted by Yamakawa Masao and Wakamatsu Fujio, members of the Documentary Photography Club for Young People, a club that he belonged to since its establishment in July 1938. The same magazine would introduce the club in its September 1938 issue.

Figure 7.4: Yamamoto Saburō, ‘Photomural’, *Foto Taimusu*, March 1939, detail.

The March 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* published a reproduction of the photomural entitled ‘Dedicated to Eternal Peace and Friendship Between America and Japan’ and featuring children from both countries gathered around monumental symbols of their nation states, produced by Furukawa Narutoshi (Figure 7.3). In the same issue, however, Yamamoto Saburō’s ‘Photomural’ (*Hekiga*), portrayed a civilisation in ruins inhabited by animals, and was seen as a two-piece double page spread (Figure 7.4). According to a text published by the author to accompany the image, the composition was inspired by his visit to the Osaka Zoo and showed elephants, a zebra, a giraffe, a monkey, bears and a sea lion scattered around a cityscape and montaged with the Surrealist motifs such as a dislocated hand pointing up and eggs floating in the sky.[18] Towards the centre of the right-hand side of the piece, an animal-like creature wearing a Japanese *kimono* dress is seen holding a young boy by his hand as they both look at the landscape, next to the Japanese flag. Although the text did not suggest a directly engaged message, the presence of the Japanese flag and a symbolic value invested in the image of a city ruin commented strongly on the Japanese military campaigning in the continent, ongoing since 1931. The title of the composition, on the other hand, reveals the space of photomurals as that of a

[18] Yamamoto Saburō (1939). Shashin hekiga [Photomural]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 3, unpaginated.

contestation between the photojournalist and Surrealist approaches to photography, at least within the illustrated press.

Published by a commercial company, Oriental, the *Foto Taimusu* would also support photojournalist photography, and was regularly reporting on both Surrealist and photojournalistic practices. On the one hand, the shared space would provide Surrealist photography with a direct means of operation. On the other, an intensified pressure on photographers to contribute to the war efforts in 1939 as the cultural value of the medium was being recognised in the production of photomurals, resulted in attempts to establish communication between them, which can be observed in various reports published in the magazine throughout the year. In the same March 1939 issue, a report was published on a joint meeting between both professional and amateur photographers with photojournalistic, 'avant-garde' and artistic aspirations, organised under the title 'The Way for Photography from Now On'.[19] Although the meeting aspired to unite diverse practitioners, none of the representatives from the last year's 'avant-garde' symposium attended the gathering except for Nagata. The following issue of the magazine would manifest a falling out of grace of the very word 'avant-garde' as Takiguchi Shūzō and Nagata would proclaim the new critical term of 'plasticity' following the change of their club's name in May. The June issue, however, reported on another joint meeting between the Tokyo club members (Imai Shigeru, Abe and Nagata) and the Documentary Photography Club for Young People (*Seinen Hōdō Shashin Kenkyūkai*), including Domon, with Koishi as a mediator and with participation from editors of the magazine, organised so as to address the subject of 'Continent and Photography'.[20] This meeting followed Abe's and Watanabe's journey to the continent from March to May of the same year, where they were engaged by the Oriental to organise photography exhibitions and stimulate exchange with local photographers in the occupied territories of

[19] Kongo no shashin wa kōde aritai [The Way for Photography from Now On] (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 61-69.
[20] Tariku to shashin no zadankai [Discussing the Continent and Photography] (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 85-92.

Northeast China and Korea.[21] The meeting aimed to share experiences of those photographers who went to the continent under a pretext of a cultural exchange but essentially to promote the country's war campaigning.[22] As they also included Abe and Koishi, who were known for their links with Surrealism, it becomes clear how, similarly to the 'new' photography practitioners before them, 'avant-garde' photographers were also mobilised in the war efforts. However, on the part of photographers, these assignments were not understood as 'photojournalist' but as a continuation of their work invested in Surrealism under the concepts of 'avant-garde' or 'plasticity'.[23] Both Abe and Koishi would later exhibit the photographs produced over the course of their assignments in such a context, as they would not entail a severing of ties with their home clubs.[24] At the same time, photojournalist imagery would often appear surreal in the second part of the decade, as daily life in the country was becoming overflowed by constant propaganda and intensified preparations for the war.

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[21] The places they visited include today's cities of Chang Chun, Shen Yang and Seoul, as per: Namigata Tsuyoshi (2005). *Ekkyō no abangyarudo* [Border-Crossing Avant-Garde]. Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, pp. 66-67.

[22] A significant feature was later dedicated to amateur practices developing in the continent in the February issue of the same magazine in 1940.

[23] Hamada Mayumi (2010). Senzen no Abe Yoshifumi no katsudō: Takiguchi Shūzō to no kaneki wo chūshin ni [Abe Yoshifumi's Prewar Activities: Focus on the Relationship with Takiguchi Shūzō]. *Niigata kenritsu kindai bijutsukan kenkyū kiyō* [Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art Research Bulletin], No. 9, p. 15.

[24] Abe published his work produced at the continent and supported publication of other associated photographers in the *Foto Taimusu* throughout 1939 and 1940. Koishi was employed by the Cabinet Information Bureau and the Navy Ministry in China and his best known series produced over the assignment was exhibited at the twenty-ninth annual exhibition of the Naniwa club in 1940, under a title *Half World* (*Han sekai*). For how the series, re-compositions based on photographs taken at the front were 'filled with scathing irony' see: Tucker, Anne Wilkes (et al.) (2003). *The History of Japanese Photography*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 348. This type of photographic exchange is still an under-researched field in the history of Japanese photography and a subject of ongoing scholarship by Takeba Jō, as confirmed in an interview with the author on May 24, 2013.

Figure 7.5: Horino Masao, *March of Schoolgirls, Gasmasks March*, 1936-1939.

Figure 7.6: Hata Daisan, *Mask*, 1939.

For example, a photograph of schoolgirls marching with gasmasks in Tokyo taken by Horino shows a type of the 'mass ornament' that Siegfried Kracauer described as a syndrome of popular spectacles organised in modernist societies as a means of mobilising the imagination of the masses (Figure 7.5).[25] This time, however, the unified 'national body' ascribed to the same logic of the mass in order to affirm the war on a level of the everyday, impregnating popular imagination with its iconography. In a montage by Hata Daisan entitled *Mask* (*Masuku*) and published in the June 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu* we see how the gas mask is embraced by a 'modern girl', the symbol of Japanese modernity, with montage used to affirm an iconography of the war as a desirable commodity (Figure 7.6). In other words, both Surrealist and photojournalist practices had an interest in the institution of realism and featured a close preoccupation with everyday life.[26] With montage being reclaimed by both practices in various moments during the 1930s, the line of differentiation between them was thinning in Japan of the later half of

[25] Kracauer describes the 'mass ornament' in relation to the Tiller Girls and also ascribes a significant role to the illustrated press for forming the logic in which 'these extravagant spectacles, which are staged by many sorts of people and not just girls and stadium crowds, have long since become an established form', as per: Kracauer, Siegfried ([1927] 1995). *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Translated by Thomas Y Levin. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, pp. 75-76.

[26] Roberts, John (1998). *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography, and the Everyday*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, p. 102.

the decade, not only in the space of the illustrated press and the public commissions but also in terms of the subject matter and the methods used.

Close to the outbreak of the Pacific War, Surrealist photography became publicly scrutinised in the press. In a June 1939 article for the *Kamera Āto* discussing 'War and Surrealism', Dan Mitsuji asked how can photography that is 'separated' from reality be of use in the social domain at the time of war, celebrating 'social realism' (*shakaiteki rearizumu*) as the only appropriate form of practice.[27] Even stylistic references to a lyrical and potentially disruptive visual material became in danger of public dismissal. For instance, Nakayama's photographs of the city of Kobe, commissioned by the Kobe Tourist Bureau and showed in a touring exhibition *Sightseeing in Kobe* in Tokyo, Kyoto and Nagoya in 1939, received criticism in the March volume of the *Asahi Kamera* by a leading critic Itagaki Takao, who expressed the view that Nakayama was not the best suited person for the job.[28] The series of photographs in question was by no means experimental and showed the best-known places in the city in a documentary manner, but was disregarded under the pretext that Nakayama's lyrical renditions of the city landscape went against the established values of realism in photojournalist photography.[29] Setting up a studio after his return from New York and Paris in the late 1920s, Nakayama's career had developed steadily since the article published in the *Asahi Kamera* in 1928, where he established his interest in 'pure' art photography.[30] From this point onwards, he became known for his production of (Surrealist) photograms and solarised prints and a part of the series shown at the Daimaru department store was among the first photographic works to

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[27] Dan Mitsuji (1939). Sensō to shūrurearizumu sono ta [War and Surrealism, and Else]. *Kamera Āto*, June Edition, p. 10.
[28] Tokuhiro Nakajima (1989). *Shirarezaru Nakayama Iwata* [*Iwata Nakayama, His Unknown Aspects*]. Tokyo: Seibu Hyakkaten, unpaginated. I use the title of the exhibition provided in English translation of the text in this volume and rely on translation of Inagaki's comment provided there.
[29] Ibid. A part of the series can be viewed in Hyogo Kenritsu Bijutsukan (2010). *Returo modan Kobe: Nakayama Iwata tachi ga nokoshita senzen no Kobe* [Nakayama Iwata Retrospective: a Photographer and Prewar Kobe] (Exh. Cat.). Kobe-shi: Hyogo Kenritsu Bijutsukan, pp. 26-50.
[30] Kimura Ihei would dissociate himself and Benitani Kichinosuke from the links between the Ashiya Photo Club and Surrealism in later writing claiming how the club was made up of rich people for whom photography was nothing more than a pastime, as per: Ishii Ayako (et al.) (1999), pp. 62-63.

be included in the *National Exhibition* in 1939. However, he was also known to have criticised the view of photography as a true document of reality in a January 1938 article for the *Kamera Kurabu* saying: 'Photography is not a part of nature. A portrait photograph is not the very person it shows. It is a different, new thing'.[31] As the radical photographic techniques of 'new' photography such as montage were incorporated in the public projects of national concern, with 'avant-garde' photographers being under pressure to contribute to the war efforts by being given opportunities to show their work and participate in photographic activities in the continent, and with technically achieved Surrealist imagery such as solarisation integrated in the domain of art practice, the main space of contestation was thus brought down to the straight, documentary photograph. Whereas it was scrutinised in those cases where it would affirm a lyrical and subjective worldview, it would equally be affirmed when subsumed in larger propaganda programs of the 'national body' regardless of the premises on which it was based.

Studies in straight shot

Takiguchi's repeated preference for the use of a straight shot in Surrealist photography throughout 1938 and 1939 should thus also be reassessed against the pressure on all practitioners to remain close to the format of photojournalist photography and thus avoid suspicion and public dismissal. The readiness of the Tokyo club to discuss practice with photojournalist photographers equally supported by the *Foto Taimusu* and to also accept assignments of the publisher in the imperial colonies, reveal the level of compromise required of the Surrealist photographers in Tokyo in order to maintain their presence in the illustrated press and avoid confrontation with the authorities in the later part of the decade. Such compromising would

[31] Nakayama Iwata (1938). Fuyu no sakuhin-shū [Winter Collection of Artworks]. *Kamera Kurabu*, Vol. 3, No. 1, unpaginated**.** The writing accompanies a studio photograph of a female sitter seen in a Japanese *kimono* dress, with traditional make-up and hairstyle and titled *Decoration* (*Dekoreishon*).

further deterritorialise Surrealist photography in the country from the means of operation of orthodox Surrealism. However, maintaining the presence in the public domain can also be understood in terms of the processes of deterritorialisation and intensification in the working of tensions between major and minor historical formations, or photojournalist and Surrealist photography. Within the Tokyo club, whereas both Nagata and Imai would show a much stronger tendency towards photo-collage, Abe's preference for achieving a 'spark' in the viewership from within the everyday would remain the closest to Takiguchi's preference of a straight shot. A part of the relationship between a photojournalistic strand of practice and Surrealist photography can thus be analysed in the examples of his work.

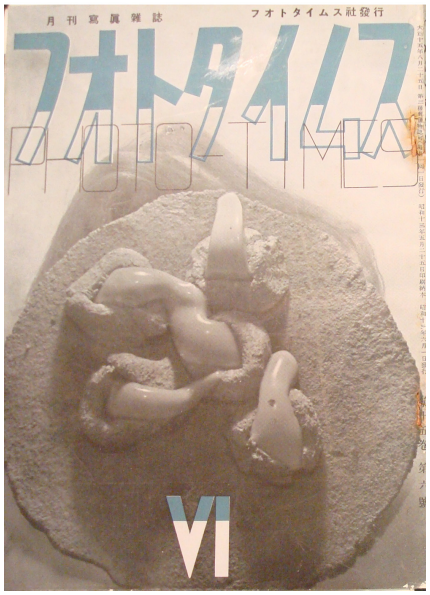

Figure 7.7: Abe Yoshifumi, *Untitled*, Foto *Taimusu*, May 1938, cover page.

Figure 7.8: Abe Yoshifumi, *Untitled*, *Foto Taimusu*, June 1938, cover page.

Abe demonstrated a strong interest in the Surrealist object, made apparent in 1938 through participation at the Kyoto exhibition of the 'Record of Wounds' Art Association, in 'A Study in Avant-Garde Direction' from the July issue of the *Foto Taimusu* as well as in the following excursion to Mt. Yake. Two cover pages produced by Abe for the same magazine in May and June attest to an equal interest in spherical objects and Hans Arp's biomorphic sculpture as developing in Nagoya at the same time (Figure 7.7, Figure 7.8). The photographs are not titled, and receive no commentary within the volumes,

but the space allocated to Abe at the moment when the debate concerning Surrealist photography would reach its peak in the aftermath of the *Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works* suggests his central positioning as a Surrealist photographer at the time. Such a position is further attested in the July 1938 issue of the *Kameraman* for which he submitted two photographs together with a short text commissioned from the editors on the subject of Surrealism and entitled simply 'Conversation'.[32]

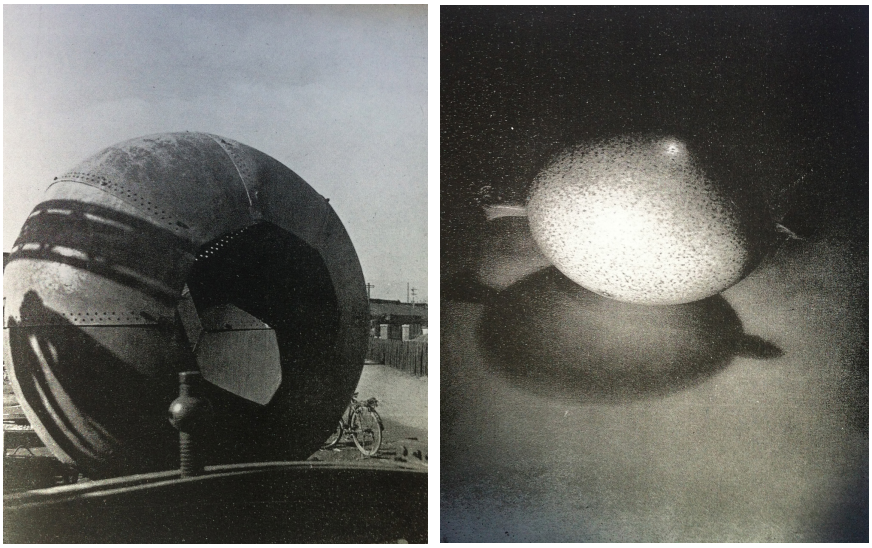

Figure 7.9: Abe Yoshifumi, # *1* and # *2*, 1938.

At the beginning of the article, Abe stressed how it resulted from his move to Hamamachi and spending of time between his house, Tokyo and Nagoya.[33] In the text, Abe admitted his insecurity when expressing himself in writing and a preference for images to speak for themselves, choosing to talk about the technical specificity of photography rather than about Surrealism, which he defined as 'a psychological state' and 'a type of perception'.[34] Two straight photographs published in the volume are titled as *#1* and *#2*, and follow each other on two subsequent pages to show found objects of round shapes (Figure 7.9). In the first case, the photograph is of an industrial construction with a hollowed centre, seen in public space, whereas the following image shows a close-up of a stone-like object reflected in shadow on the surface.

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[32] Abe Yoshifumi (1938). Gūgo [Conversation]. *Kameraman*, July Edition, p. 21.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

Although they suggest Abe's interest in portraying erotic encounters in the everyday, his insecurity at expressing himself in writing suggests that he preferred the theoretical premises of his work to be delivered by the chief critic of the Tokyo club.[35]

Figure 7.10: Abe Yoshifumi, *Two Poses*, 1939.

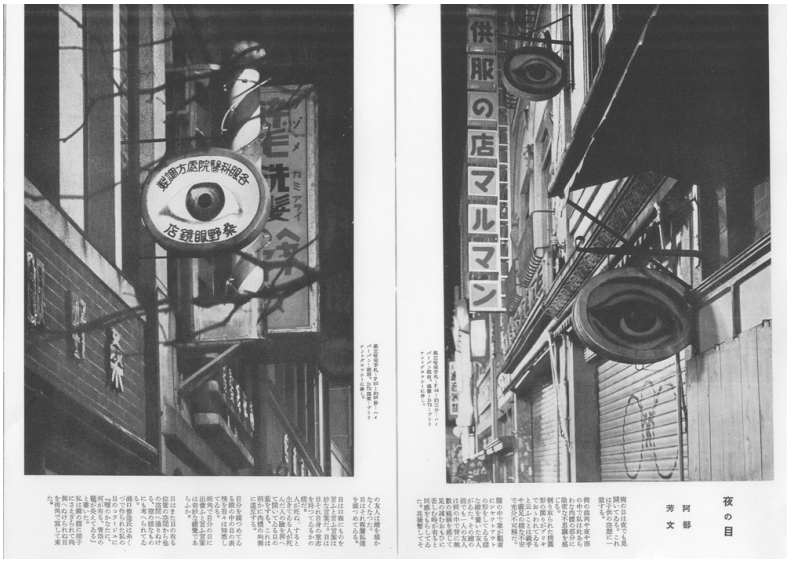

Figure 7.11: Abe Yoshifumi, *The Night's Eye*, 1939.

[35] In a later recollection, Abe revealed how whatever himself or Nagata would say to explain their work Takiguchi's critical force would always prevail, as per: Hamada Mayumi (2010), Note 28, p. 16.

Simultaneously to the change of name of the Tokyo club in 1939, Abe was employed by the Oriental to engage in photographic activities at the occupied territories in China and Korea. Regardless of the commission, the same company continued publishing his studies in the Surrealist object in the *Foto Taimusu*. In *Two Poses* (*Futatsu no pōzu*) from March we see two shots of female models, placed in a studio and in an urban setting and evoking the layout of the pervious *Kameraman* feature (Figure 7.10). In the accompanying notes, Abe affirmed how the images were not simple portraits but reflected on his research in the object photography.[36] In *The Night's Eye* (*Yoru no me*) from April, the same layout was maintained to show street views at night, focusing on opticians' signboards (Figure 7.11). Although these images can be formally read as a take on Manuel Álverez Bravo's well-known photograph of a shop front entitled *Optical Parable* (1931), a connection can also be made to Takiguchi's text on the relation between the Surrealist object and photography. In 'Object and Photography, Especially the Surrealist Object' (August 1938), Takiguchi gave an example of a 'pile of lenses composing a strange shape at an optician's shop' that he saw following the Great Kanto earthquake as an example of 'disaster' objects (*object peturbé*).[37] The relation to Takiguchi's writing was also made in the accompanying notes, suggesting the continuous collaboration between the two.[38] Abe's position as a Surrealist photographer, however, was more complex than being simply a member of the Tokyo club as he was also involved with a number of art and photography groups around the country. For example, he also helped to establish the Avant-Garde Photography Group (*Abangarudo Foto Guruppe*) in Shizuoka, together with Sawano Tarō.[39] Choosing a mobile and undecided position, between different associations, magazines, places where he worked and

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[36] Abe Yoshifumi (1939). Futatsu no pōzu [Two Poses]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 3, unpaginated.
[37] Takiguchi Shūzō (1938). Buttai to shashin, tokuni shururearisumu no obuje ni tsuite [Object and Photography, and Especially the Surrealist Object]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 15, No. 8, p. 66.
[38] Abe tells a story of how Takiguchi commented on an unpublished collage of eyes he made from waste fibres saying how: 'There is something in the pupil of the eye. A stove making blue sky is burning', as per: Abe Yoshifumi (1939), unpaginated.
[39] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, p. 192.

lived, Abe maintained a constant presence in both art and photography circles in the later part of the decade, similarly to Takiguchi.

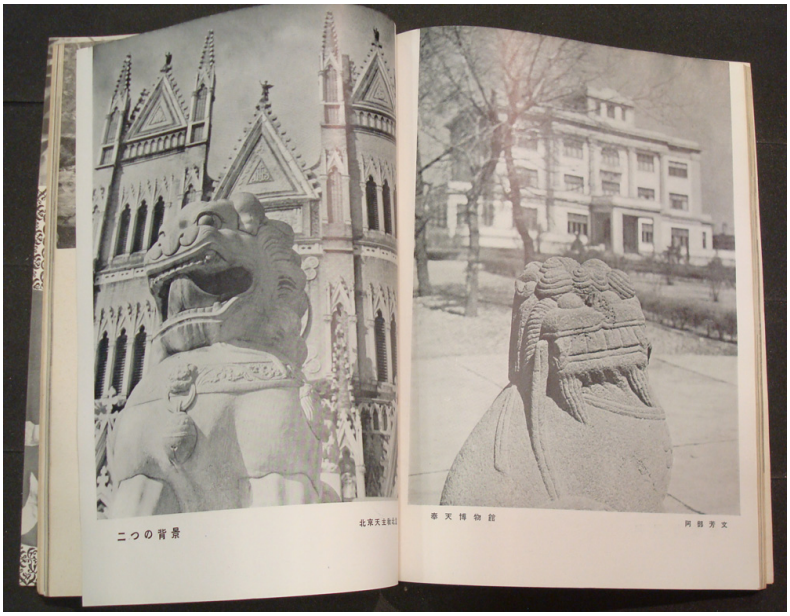

Figure 7.12: Abe Yoshifumi, *Two Landscapes*, 1940.

Figure 7.13: Abe Yoshifumi, *White Portrait*, *Black Portrait*, 1940.

In 1940, Abe returned to the double page object studies in the *Foto Taimusu*. In the February issue, his *Two Landscapes* (*Futatsu no fūkei*) show the Chinese guardian lions (*shishi*) placed in front of the cultural monuments in Asia, the Church of the Saviour in Beijing (1890) on the left and a national museum on the right, which Abe described as the sites where ‘European

windows' opened in the continent (Figure 7.12).[40] In the June issue, the same layout is seen in another pairing of female portraits, this time rendered in solarisation and titled as *White Portrait* (*Shiroi porutreto*) and *Black Portrait* (*Kuroi porutreto*) (Figure 7.13). The latter were Abe's submissions to the first *Art Culture Exhibition* (*Bijutsu Bunka-ten*), organised by a newly formed group established by Fukuzawa Ichirō and previous members of the 'Period of Wounds' Association in 1939, which took place in April 1940. The Art Culture Association was the last attempt at organising a coherent group of Surrealist artists in the decade and also had an accompanying magazine.[41] A rare application of solarisation by Abe signalled affirmation of his artistic ambitions, as the format was recognised to be artistically suitable by Nakayama's inclusion in the *National Exhibition* in the previous year. Abe's undecided position, his preference for a straight shot and a restraint from elaborating his work in public combined with his public commissions, thus enabled him to continue an active production of Surrealist photographs well into 1940, at the time of not only silencing dissident activities in Japan but also of a halt to most of Surrealist activity in Europe. Regardless of his mobile positioning against various practices, he would maintain the same approach in his work, which was focused on production of arresting juxtapositions in object studies. Grounded in his interest in the Surrealist object, the approach was maintained both in the assignments in the continent, as well as in his purely Surrealist submissions to the *Art Culture Exhibition*. The first exhibition of this Surrealist group, however, was also the last as its preparations in 1941 were cancelled due to arrests of Surrealist artists around the country, including Takiguchi and Fukuzawa.[42]

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[40] Abe Yoshifumi (1940). Abe Yoshifumi no ketsu [Abe Yoshifumi's Page]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 33. Location of the museum site is unclear from Abe's reference.

[41] Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, pp. 156-157.

[42] In a text reporting on the exhibition published in the same magazine volume, Abe reflected on the fact that only four photographers were exhibited at the exhibition (including himself and Nagata) explaining that the submissions from Nagoya and Fukuoka arrived too late to be included in the show and promising better coordination for the next year, as per: Abe Yoshifumi ([1940] 2001). Bijutsu bunka ten wo owaete [Art Culture Exhibition, Afterthoughts]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to*

In the same magazine issue (June 1940), however, the discussion with regard to photomurals would reach its peak. The volume not only reproduced a sample of the ongoing photomural display, this time focusing on the strength of Japanese industry and not army, but it also included a report from a meeting between the artists included in its production, representatives of the Oriental, members of the *Foto Taimusu* editorial team and the governmental officials.[43] In addition, the volume also included results of a survey 'How do I See Photomural in the Future' distributed among the best established photographers and critics, including Hanawa Gingo, Yamanaka Chirū, Shimozato Yoshio, Sakata Minoru, Takiguchi, Abe, and Nagata.[44] The survey asked of the photographers and critics to envisage a photomural that they would like to see.[45] Whereas Takiguchi underlined how such a great effort invested in the production of photomurals should be followed by preservation and an adequate museum display, Yamanaka called for a stronger focus on photographic 'plasticity' as a starting point in the production.[46] Yamanaka's call becomes of relevance in the perspective of the latest shift in practice of the Nagoya club, as it potentially affirmed Nagoya photographers as suitable for future commissions of this type following a new focus on traditional aesthetics taking place in their club since the last year.

Cultural value of a local Surrealism

Sakata's dissatisfaction with how Surrealist photography was interpreted in Japan in 1939 was made clear in 'Anti-Surrealism and Anti-Avant-Garde: a

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hihyō [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 472-473.

[43] Shashin hekiga no genzai to shōrai wo kataru [Discussing the Present and the Future of Photomurals] (1940). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 17, No. 6, p. 41.

[44] Shashin hekiga no shōrai wa kō ate hoshii [How do I See Photomural in the Future] (1940). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 25-27.

[45] Hanawa Gingo's futuristic vision of a projected flow of abstracted images was a reflection on a subsequent application of technology at the 1941 fair and will resonate with some of the later developments in Japanese postwar art, especially with the fifth presentation of the *Jikken Kōbo* group in 1953, as per: Ibid, p. 25. This presentation of the group is discussed in Conclusion.

[46] Ibid, pp. 25-26.

Non-Avant-Garde Artist's Boycott of Pseudo-Surrealism' published in the March 1939 edition of the *Kamera Āto*.[47] In this article, Sakata blamed the 'photography world', or monthly photo magazines and exhibitions, for driving the practice to 'dilettantism' in which the 'surreal' (*shūru*) came to stand for almost anything, with its methods often confused with Dada and without any awareness of automatism or paranoia-criticism. To Sakata, the condition resulted in a lot of 'avant-garde games' (*zen'ei gekko*) and 'surreal play' (*shūru asobi*) without much critical value and thus required the advancement of proper research.[48] Furious with a case in which even the word 'Surrealism' was misspelled in Japanese, he declared that in such a situation it could equally be called anything, for example 'variarism' (with 'variarist' as its practitioner and 'variaristic' as its property), and that he was left no choice but to become both anti-Surrealist and anti-avant-garde oriented.[49] Thereon, his 'Basic Explanation of Surrealist Photography and Photo-Abstraction' from May and June can be seen as an attempted effort at clarifying the premises of the existing research, this time under the concept of 'plasticity'. In the former article, however, Sakata proposed that the 'dilettantism' resulting from a misunderstanding of Surrealist photography in Japan required the development of a local movement that would bring it closer to home, calling for a 'Japan-ised' (*nipponaizu sareru*) practice in defence of what he termed as 'variarism'.[50] Furthermore, in the May instalment of 'Inventory Notebook of a Picture Making Process', he stressed how the latest achievements in Japanese photography were unique to the country and should gain a cultural impact both nationally and internationally.[51] A related articulation of photography in relation to Surrealism can even be identified in the Nagoya meeting from December 1938, in Yamanaka's elaboration of 'avant-garde'

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[47] Sakata Minoru ([1939] 2001). Anchisyururearizumu to anchiabangarrito, hizen'ei geijutsuka, giji chōgenshugi haisekiron [Anti-Surrealism and Anti-Avant-Garde: a Non-Avant-Garde Artist's Boycott of Pseudo-Surrealism]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 330-332.
[48] Ibid, p. 331.
[49] The mistake took place in a mixture of Japanese *katakana* and ideogram letters as *shūruchōriyarizumu* – with the ideogram for *chō* being mistaken with *nagai*, whereas 'variarism' is spelled in Japanese as *bariarizumu*, as per: Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Sakata Minoru (1939). Sakuga gihō tanaoroshi chō [Inventory of a Picture Making Process]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 57.

under terms such as 'cultural value'.[52] In his 'Sakata Minoru's Artworks' from January 1939, Yamanaka also affirmed how Japanese artists should stop being influenced by foreign photographers and become, instead, a source of influence.[53] The same 'cultural value' was established for photography by Shimozato in 'Thoughts of a Photo Amateur' from June, and was the most apparent in the new title of their club.[54] The joint insistence on a culturally valuable character of Surrealist photography by all three main members of the Nagoya club should thus be understood as an attempt to validate their work against the mainstream photojournalism.[55] Also, as the commercial and governmental sponsors would continue collaborating with radical photographers through to 1939, and in the light of Yamanaka's comment in the June 1940 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, the effort can be seen as a next step intended to affirm the practice of the Nagoya club after its recognition in art circles in the same year. It can also be seen as a possible means for further approving Surrealist photography as a relevant competitor for the production of photomurals. The fact that the Japanese pavilion at the Paris exposition was publicised and discussed in the 1937 issue of the *Cahiers d'art*, a relevant source of the original Surrealist texts in Japan, can be seen as a probable impetus for such an ambition.

Although Sakata developed an individual project in the 'Inventory Notebook', all the other photographers from Nagoya who previously took part in the *Mesemb Genus* continued to work in what Shimozato previously defined as the 'camera's automatism', using close-up and cropped photographs to offer abstracted views of everyday scenery and mostly focusing on natural objects. However, most of the captions following their submissions to the *Foto*

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[52] Zen'ei shashin saikentō zadankai [Round Table Meeting Rethinking Avant-Garde Photography] (1939). *Kameraman*, February Edition, p. 22.
[53] Yamanaka Chirū ([1939] 1999). Sakata Minoru sakuhin ni tsuite [Sakata Minoru's Artworks]. In: Kurosawa Yoshiteru (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 6: Yamanka Chirū 1930 nendai no organaizā* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 6: Yamanaka Chirū, Organiser of the 1930s]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 431.
[54] Shimozato Yoshio ([1939] 2001). Foto amachua kō [Thoughts of a Photo Amateur]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 285.
[55] For how Sakata's 'Anti-Surrealism and Anti-Avant-Garde' reflects precisely such anxiety see: Takeba Jō (2006). Nagoya no shashin-shi wo meguru danshō [Pieces of Photography History in Nagoya]. *Rear*, No. 14, p. 10.

Taimusu avoided the use of the word 'Surrealism' or even the reterritorialised terms such as the 'Surrealist Freud Photos'. Instead, they ascribed to a more allusive 'plasticism', or even more ambiguous alternatives such as 'something' and 'energy'.

Figure 7.14: Inagaki Taizō, *Touching and Feeling at Night*, 1939.

Figure 7.15: Tajima Tsugio, *Bad Omen*, 1939.

For instance, in the July 1939 issue of the magazine, Inagaki Taizō's *Touching and Feeling at Night* (*Yoru no shokkaku*) and Tajima Tsugio's *Bad Omen* (*Kyōchō*) were described by Yamanaka in terms of their 'plastic potential' and poetic 'longing' (Figure 7.14, Figure 7.15).[56] Also, Sakata described two untitled images submitted by Shimozato and Tajima to the November issue in terms of 'plasticity' for the first and 'energy' for the latter.[57] The euphemistic indications of Surrealist content prevailed throughout the year and even included 'something', which was used by Inagaki in his March submission to the magazine.[58] Whereas the Surrealist origin of the relationship to poetry or 'plasticism' would be offered in other different texts, seemingly vitalist 'something' or 'energy' would assign an invisible psychological quality to the images, gradually loosening the ties between the

[56] Yamanaka Chirū (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 7, unpaginated.
[57] Sakata Minoru (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 11, unpaginated.
[58] Inagaki Taizō (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 3, unpaginated. The writing accompanied a straight shot of a Mesemb cactus titled *Beautiful Fissure* (*Utsukushii kiretsu*), pointing out how he used abstraction to produce its effect, whereas 'something' was written in a loanword from English as *samushingu*.

material produced and its Surrealist origin.[59] Sakata's dissatisfaction with how Surrealist practice was being addressed in the press can be thus understood as a cause of the shift, but his article should in effect be read as pointing to the intensified suppression of any critical and thus potentially subversive content. Within the Nagoya club, however, the final change would take place not in terms of vocabulary but in the domain of figuration, as the focus would shift from natural objects to those associated with Japanese traditional aesthetics.

A link between the traditional aesthetics and the Surrealist object was already emphasised in the previous year by both Takiguchi and Yamanaka, whereas an important development in this regard took place in Hasegawa Saburō's contribution to the third exhibition of the Free Artists' Association in 1939. An abstract artist known for his active involvement in the avant-garde art circles, Hasegawa submitted a series of twelve photographs to the exhibition. Titled *Chronicle of One's Native Place* (*Kyōdoshi*), it comprised photographs of everyday scenes, most of which were rendered in close-up and focused on natural objects such as stones and trees. Eight photographs from the series were reprinted in the *Mizue* in August 1939, where they received individual titles and were accompanied with poetic writing by Hasegawa.[60] The writing displaced the photographs from a firm relation in the everyday, highlighting their primary function to operate as images of the Surrealist objects delivered in straight shots.[61]

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[59] For how 'energy' was also used by Takiguchi in his reflection on the *Mesemb Genus* see: Takiguchi Shūzō ([1940] 2001). Shimozato Yoshio hencho Mesemu zoku ni tsuite [*Mesemb Genus*, Authored and Edited by Shimozato Yoshio]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, p. 253.

[60] Hasegawa Saburō ([1939] 2001). *Kyōdoshi* [Chronicle of One's Native Place]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 379-386.

[61] For such an approach in delivery of the images, especially in relation to Takiguchi's writing on the Surrealist object and photography see: Taniguchi Eri (2009). Kikaiteki shikaku media no 'eikyō' kara miru Shōwa 10 nendai no zen'ei kaiga - Takiguchi Shūzō 'Eikyō ni tusite' (Shōwa 14 nen) wo tegakarini [Avant-Garde Painting of the 1930s Seen from the Perspective of Mechanical Media 'Influence', in Reference to Takiguchi Shūzō's 'On influence' (1939)]. In: Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo [Tokyo Research Institute for Cultural Assets] (ed.), *Shōwaki bijutsu tenrankai no kenkyū: Senzenhen* [Research into Art exhibitions in Shōwa Era, Prewar Period]. Tokyo: Kokuritsu Kikō Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, p. 399.

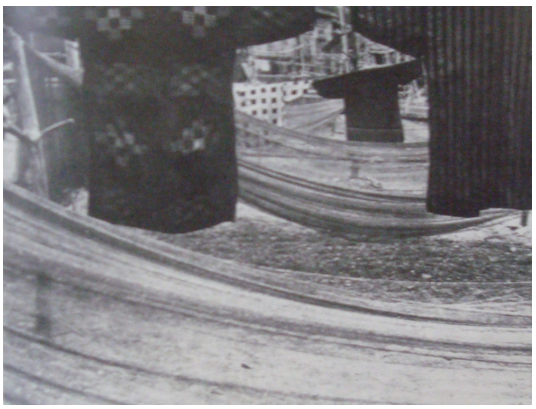

Figure 7.16: Hasegawa Saburō, *Sliding Door*, 1939.

Figure 7.17: Hasegawa Saburō, *Garments*, 1939.

For example, a photograph titled *Sliding Door* (*Shōji*) shows a cropped image of a sliding door with abstraction insinuated in the patterns used for the paper windows (Figure 7.16). The writing accompanying the image reads: 'This house is no different than a modest and refined old woman. She is almost like the unconscious - I have taken the picture, as my camera could not just pass by such a strong and pure lyrical plasticity in silence'.[62] In another photograph, titled as *Garments* (*Koromo*), another focus on the traditional subject matter is seen in the image of drying dyed textiles and *kimono* dresses, whereas the writing simply reads: 'Moving things are beautiful' (Figure 7.17).[63] With references to automatism in the 'pure lyrical plasticity' resembling the unconscious mind in the former image and 'mobile object' in the latter, the series thus combined the existing experiments with the Surrealist object in photography with an abstract quality of the traditional aesthetics. *Sliding Door* reappeared in the September 1939 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, again accompanied with Hasegawa's writing. In the volume, it complemented Sakata's and Shimozato's submissions to the same exhibition, thus contextualising his practice within the 'photography world'.

[62] Hasegawa Saburō ([1939] 2001), p. 379.
[63] Ibid, p. 386.

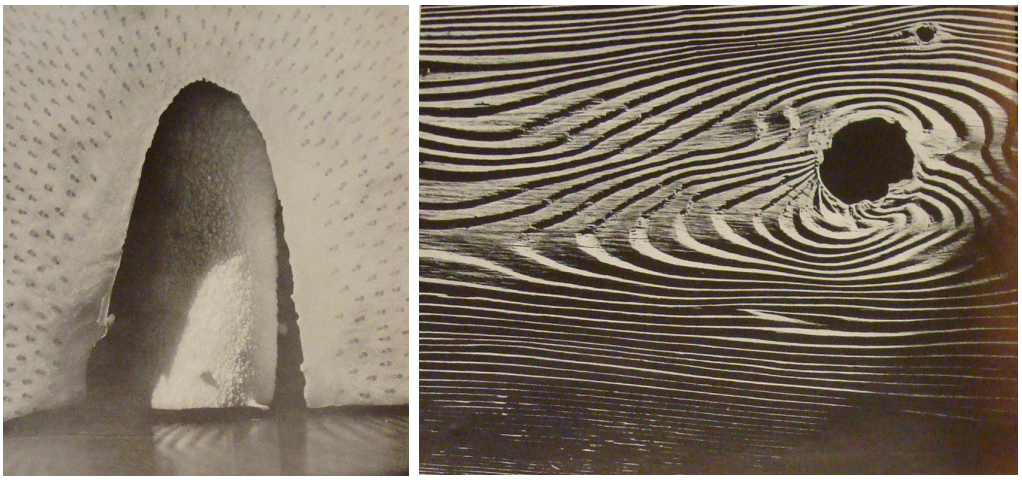

Figure 7.18: Shimozato Yoshio, *Radiating Design*, 1939.

Figure 7.19: Hitori Yoshizaki, *Eternity*, 1939.

Unlike Hasegawa's series, and similarly to Sakata's *Sphere* for its use of manipulation in the darkroom, Shimozato's *Radiating Design* (*Hōsha suru sekkei*) seen in the volume also combined at least two images to achieve its effect (Figure 7.18). The image shows an entry-like opening in snow with a number of objects placed around it so as to indicate 'radiation' from the title and is placed atop of a surface that shows lines in flow. In a commentary on the image, Sakata would recognize how there was a beauty in a suggested 'entrance' but would foreground primarily its technical achievement.[64] In the following October issue, Hitori Yoshizaki's photograph titled *Eternity* (*Yūkyū*) would mirror *Radiating Design*, and was explained as showing the universe, with 'endless irregular orbits inscribed by the satellites of a peep hole, going far, far away but not coming back' (Figure 7.19).[65] *Eternity* was thus a take on Shimozato's 'camera's automatism', especially as it also alluded to the photographer's 'psyche' contained behind the peep hole as in the *Mesemb Genus*. The photograph accompanied a feature that announced the establishment of the *Société Irf* (*Soshiete Irufu*) club from Fukuoka, founded as a result of the exchange between Surrealist photographers active in the city and other Kansai based clubs.[66] It thus announced two simultaneous

[64] Sakata Minoru (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 9, unpaginated.
[65] Itō Kenshi (1939). *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 16, No. 10, unpaginated.
[66] Sakata Minoru travelled to Fukuoka twice a month, carrying with him copies of the *Cahiers d'art* and *Minotaure* so that they could discuss them together, over a period of two-and-a-half

events: the establishment of the Fukuoka club and the change of the Nagoya club's name.

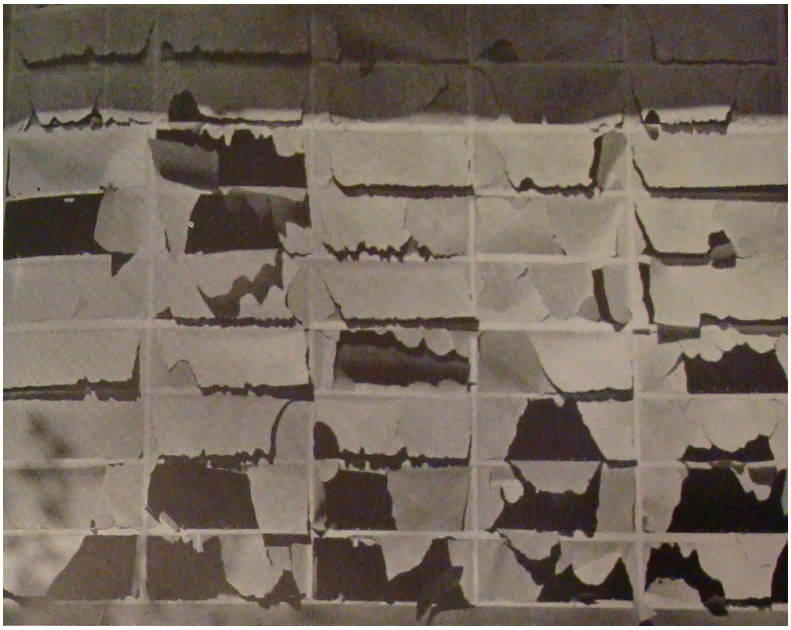

Figure 7.20: Konomi Giichirō, *Untitled*, 1939.

Focused on the delivery of objects in straight shots, the work of the Fukuoka club also reflected the importance of Hasegawa's recent series.[67] The 'camera's automatism' is thus complemented with a traditional subject matter in Konomi Giichirō's untitled photograph that was captioned as number two and followed *Eternity* in the same issue (Figure 7.20). It shows a view of a traditional window panel with its individual papers shred, resulting in an abstract and suggestive texture of the image.[68] The club's manifesto was printed beneath the image, with its opening paragraph introducing an interest of the club in exploration of a poetic content behind an abstract form, similarly

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years, as per: Sakata Minoru (1988). *Zōkei shashin 1934-1941: Sakata Minoru sakuhinshū* [*Structure in Photography: Minoru Sakata's Anthology*]. Nagoya: Arumu, p. 164. In the same bibliographical notes Sakata explained his collaboration with Hasegawa Saburō on a series of photographs produced in 1938. For a rare account of this collaboration see: Taniguchi Eri (2011). Kindai Nihon-no 'zen'ei geijutsu' to media, tekunoroji ['Avant-Garde Art' in Modern Japan and Media, Technology]. PhD thesis, Tokyo University of the Arts.

[67] For how Hasegawa's series directly influenced the club's activities see: Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan (ed.) (1990). *Nihon no shūrurearisumu: 1925-1945* [Surrealism in Japan: 1925-1945] (Exh. Cat.). Nagoya: Nihon no shūrurearisumuten jikkō iinkai, p. 200.

[68] S*hōji* equally refers to sliding doors, windows and room partitions, and different materials are used for rectangular wooden panels. The image received commentary by Takashi Wataru in the volume comparing it with Mondrian's abstraction, as per: *Foto Taimusu* (1939). Vol. 16, No. 10, unpaginated.

to Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy.[69] Following this introduction, the text reads:

> *Société Irf* calls for locality. We believe that our forefathers who lived on the Japanese soil have left us with a high and a deep surreal world, and that we who have the same blood running in our veins should advance towards the time in which we focus on our own heritage, which we understand better than the literary translations of Western Surrealism.[70]

The first two paragraphs thus contrasted a well-known interest in both a Surrealist poetic content and an abstract form with the shift towards the traditional aesthetics as a means of its communication, establishing the local heritage as a better-suited ground to Japanese Surrealists. A reclaiming of 'locality' was also suggested in the club's name, a reversal of the Japanese word *furui* for 'old' into a meaningless *irufu*, which accompanied the French word for 'society'. In other words, the manifesto announced a shift of focus of Surrealist photography on everyday life, under the impact of Hasegawa's exploration of the Surrealist object in photography and in collaboration with Sakata during his visits to Fukuoka. The use of both words 'surreal' and 'Surrealism' in the text were a rare exception to a prevailing situation in 1939, when most of the other photographers and critics would have already moved on to substitute it with 'plasticity' or any other equally elusive term. The club's manifesto thus also proclaimed the program of the Nagoya club, which could no longer risk the use of the word.

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

Figure 7.21: Sakata Minoru, *Untitled*, *Foto Taimusu*, September 1939, cover page.

Figure 7.22: Sakata Minoru, *Lace Made by Insects*, 1939.

Regardless of just achieving an ambitious project within the concept of ‘plasticity’, Sakata also re-focused on straight photography for delivery of austere aesthetics alongside the *Société Irf* in late 1939 and early 1940. After the affirmation of Surrealist photography as an art practice based on its technical capabilities, he thus used the newly gained alliances with the artists such as Hasegawa to simultaneously develop another project that would shift the practice back to a contestation with the predominant photojournalism. This shift was already announced in a photograph of a leaf that was published on the cover of the *Foto Taimusu* in September 1939, and was also seen in Sakata’s submission to the *Kamera Kurabu* in October (Figure 7.21, Figure 7.22). On the cover page of the *Foto Taimusu*, the photograph is seen in black and red design and receives no caption, whereas its later rendition is titled as *Lace Made by Insects* (*Mushi no tsukutta rēsu*). The title of the latter suggests that the abstract shape of the leaf was achieved by the working of insects on its surface, producing an image of decomposition and ruin, similarly to Konomi’s untitled photograph also seen in October.

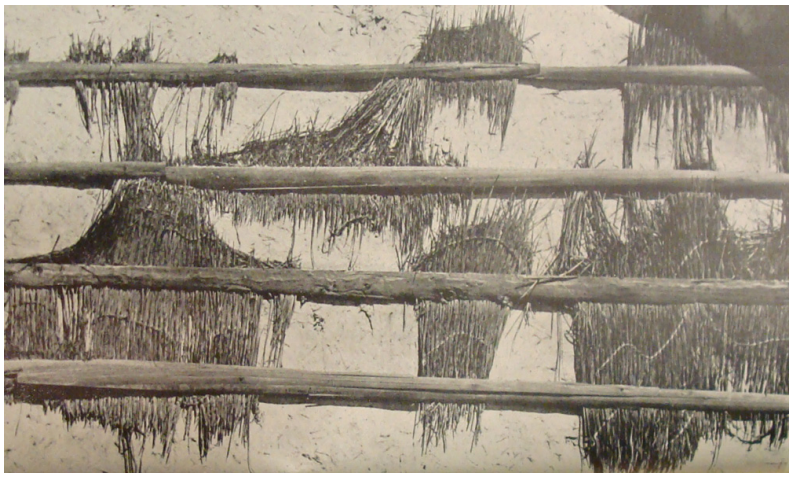

Figure 7.23: Sakata Minoru, *Peasant House*, 1939.

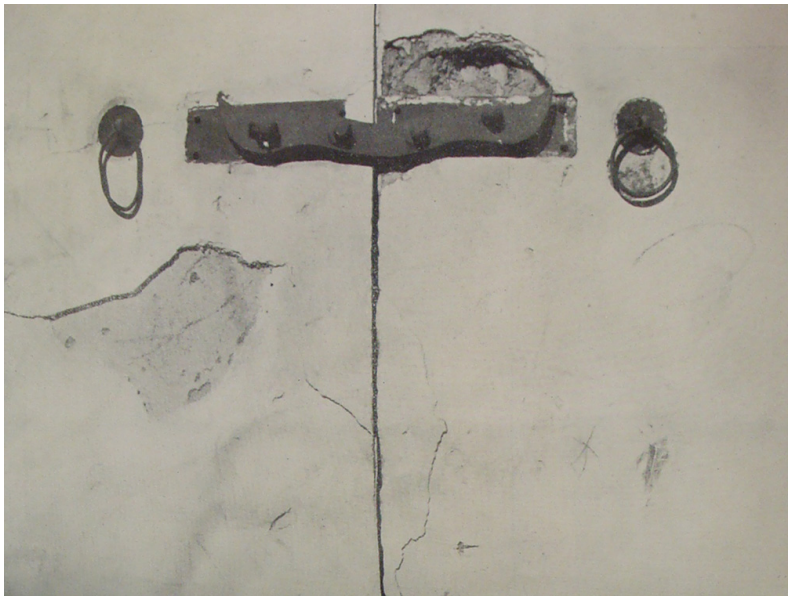

Figure 7.24: Konomi Giichirō, *White Door*, 1940.

Another photograph submitted by Sakata to the December issue of the *Foto Taimusu* was titled *Peasant House* (*Nomin no kaoku ni tsuite*) and shows a similar interest in the abstract texture of everyday objects (Figure 7.23). In a submission to the following issue of the magazine in January 1940, Konomi reaffirmed the interest in the everyday as a process that inscribes materials with cracks and fissures in *White Door* (*Shiroi tobira*) (Figure 7.24). The approach was further supported in the same volume of the magazine in submissions by Hisano Hisashi from the *Société Irf* as well as by Tajima and Inagaki from the Nagoya club, offering abstracted renditions of natural and

common-use objects and attesting to how different members of both clubs supported the practice in close coordination. The chief method remained abstraction, achieved in close-up views and cropped photographs of objects. However, insistence on a specific locality departed from Shimozato's earlier definition of the 'camera's automatism' as an abstraction of individual desire, into its explicit understanding not only as a formal but as a social process as well.[71] As such, these photographs should be understood as an attempted demystification of the processes of what Kracauer termed a 'false concreteness' taking place simultaneously and within the same domain as the straight shot.[72] As Kracauer pointed out, the primary abstractness of power structures and forces of capital is accompanied with the forceful attempts to reduce its complexity resulting in 'false concretions', put in the service of achieving organisation and form (of the mass).[73] These photographs would thus indicate the attempts that aim to drive the processes of abstraction to their very end, as the only way forward Kracauer saw for the processes of modernity.[74] Such attempts, he suggested, needed to take place not outside or away from the processes of abstraction that they reflect, but directly in the centre of their taking place.[75] Moving away from any specific depiction of locality, they should also be viewed against what David Cunningham has recently defined as an 'objective abstraction', a type of production that complicates and reconfigures local specificity as 'fugitive, transitory and migrant' in its relation to a globality against which it necessarily ascribes its meaning.[76] As Cunningham has argued, such abstraction is not conditioned by the loss of locality, but is purposefully produced as a means to investigate and renegotiate a 'new metropolitan and global logic of social connectivity and being in the world'.[77]

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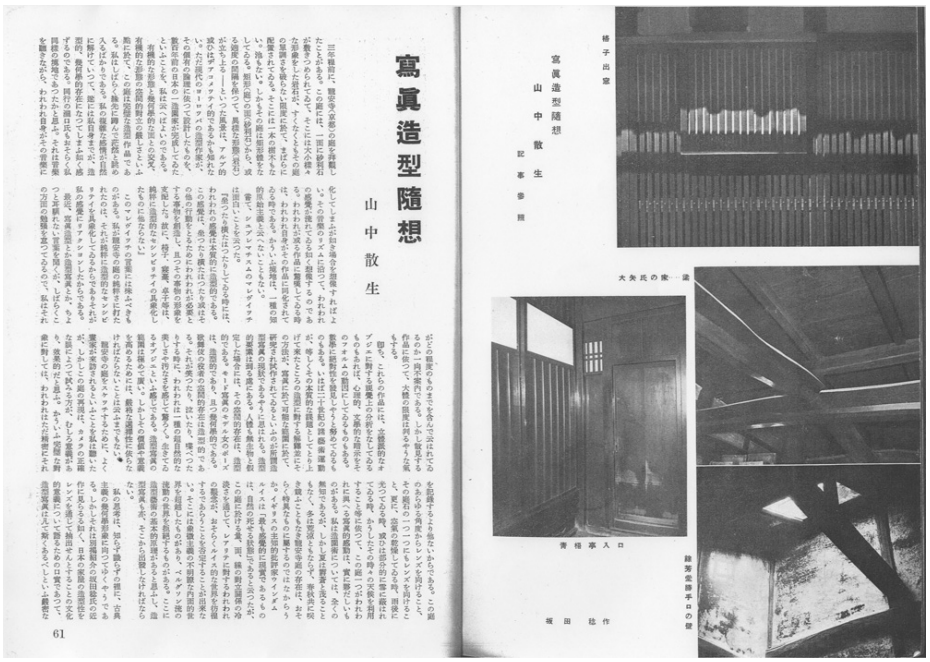
[71] Baker, George (2010). Photography and Abstraction. In: Cotton, Charlotte (et al.), *Words Without Pictures*. New York: Aperture; London: Thames & Hudson, p. 359.
[72] Kracauer, Siegfried ([1927] 1995), p. 81.
[73] Ibid. See also: Hito Steyerl's response to Baker, George (2010), p. 383.
[74] Kracauer, Siegfried ([1927] 1995), p. 17.
[75] Ibid, p. 86.
[76] Cunningham, David (2012). The Spectres of Abstraction and the Place of Photography. *Philosophy of Photography*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 200-202.
[77] Ibid, p. 207.


寫眞造型隨想

山中散生

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寫眞造型隨想

山中散生

Figure 7.25: Yamanaka Chirū, ‘Occasional Thoughts on Plastic Photography’, *Foto Taimusu*, July 1940, detail.

The shift in focus of the Nagoya club in relation to Hasegawa’s series and the *Société Irf* was only theorised in terms of the relationship between ‘plasticity’ and traditional aesthetics in ‘Occasional Thoughts on Plastic Photography’, a text written by Yamanaka for the July 1940 issue of the *Foto Taimusu.* The text was accompanied with four photographs of traditional Japanese interior design taken by Sakata (Figure 7.25).[78] In this text, Yamanaka set out to explore the recently established concept of ‘plasticity’ to describe a potential it holds for bringing forward Japanese traditional aesthetics, as seen in Japanese gardens and interior design. In accordance with much of Sakata’s previous writing on the subject, ‘plasticity’ was for Yamanaka closely related to the work of Arp and Alberto Giacometti, and also drew attention to the problem of the object in photography, allowing the practice to include ‘psychological’ and ‘literary’ content.[79] However, as the traditional garden design for Yamanaka transcended elusive subjective symbolism and was

[78] Yamanaka Chirū ([1940] 2000). Shashin zōkei zuisō [Occasional Thoughts on Plastic Photography]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 486-488.
[79] Ibid, p. 487.

situated outside of what the French philosopher Henri Bergson described as a 'world of flow' it offered a basis for the development of 'plastic' art and therefore 'plastic' photography.[80] Against this view of 'plastic' photography as existing beyond subjectivity and temporality, Yamanaka explained how a seeming turn to 'classicism' of its subject matter could be best understood through appreciation of Sakata's recent practice, bringing forth the cultural value of 'plastic' photography with his interest in Japanese traditional design. To Yamanaka, the main potential of its austerity was to 'render difficult things simple', as an imperative of abstraction exemplified in the work of Arp and Joan Miró.[81] Discussing Sakata's four photographs seen in the article, he insisted how they maximised the 'plastic' quality of a Japanese house using capabilities of the photographic art, visualising and rearranging it.[82]

Yamanaka's referencing of Bergson on this occasion, most probably with regard to his *Matter and Memory* (1896) or later *Creative Evolution* (1907), where he developed an idea of time in the concept of 'duration' (*la durée*) becomes of importance for the use of a word 'flow' (*nagare*). The word was related to Bergson's writing, but was also featured or suggested in a number of Surrealist photographs throughout 1939.[83] Yamanaka makes sure that his reference is not misunderstood as a departure from Bergson, disagreeing in the previous paragraph with the English Vorticist painter and writer Wyndham Lewis, known for his criticism of Bergson.[84] Referencing of Bergson's 'flow' in the object photographs produced in the last year should be understood as an affirmation of the cross-cultural notion of temporality in accordance with an already established interest in breaking away from temporal linearity by Surrealist photographers (including Yamanaka) in their production of photo-

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[80] Yamanaka gives an example of how photography can record the change of seasons in his friend's Japanese garden, as per: Ibid.
[81] Yamanaka makes a clear distinction that everything that is simple is not necessarily good, and that good practice 'renders complex things understandable', as per: Ibid, p. 488.
[82] Yamanaka establishes four elements required in such a practice: the rhythm of line, assembly of form, atmosphere, and the relation between light and environment, as per: Ibid.
[83] As for example in the titles of Abe's *Flow* and Sakata's *Flowing Eyeball* that were discussed in the previous chapter, or in the formal qualities of Hitori's *Eternity* discussed in this chapter.
[84] Yamanaka disagrees with Lewis's claim how individualism causes destruction of nature, as per: Yamanaka Chirū ([1940] 2000), p. 488.

collages.[85] However, Yamanaka's insistence upon how 'plasticism' is situated outside of the 'flow' and in the constructed nature of Japanese gardens as subjects of contemplation reveals how 'plastic' photography is not aimed at reproducing reality but at deliberately constructing a type of produced and objective abstraction that would reflect on it. To Yamanaka, Sakata's photographs were not simply portraying and thus mystifying Japanese interior design, famously celebrated by Junichirō Tanizaki in *The Praise of Shadows* (1933) as one of the most characteristic qualities of Japanese culture.[86] By 'visualising' and 'rearranging' what he terms a 'plastic quality' of Japanese housing, Yamanaka would rather have in mind how Sakata's photographs could expose and thus reverse the constructed nature of the nationalist program celebrating Japanese aesthetics as unique and eternal. These photographs were not to stand for the qualities they were portraying but were understood as objects of intellectual contemplation situated outside of the 'flow' of life and time. Thus the chief difference between Yamanaka's and Sakata's approaches to photography from that of the nationalist propaganda is situated in the understanding of the medium not as an index of reality but as a constructed space that reveals and reflects those abstract processes that surround it. The fact that such a different approach to photography would entail a danger of awakening potentially subversive critical thought can be seen in the example of dismissing Nakayama's practice as unsuitable to the accepted paradigm of photographic veracity for precisely the same claim.

The change of the Nagoya club's name in November 1939 reflected in the shift towards abstracted photographs inspired by traditional aesthetics was famously a point of disagreement between Sakata and Yamamoto Kansuke, who decided to leave the club as a result. In a later recollection of their last meeting, Yamamoto explained his decision to leave as resulting from Sakata's proposal to combine 'nationalism' with 'innovative photography'.[87] From the perspective of this recollection, the shift towards traditional aesthetics

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[85] For such a cross-cultural understanding of the notion see: Hodges, Matt (2008). Rethinking Time's Arrow: Bergson, Deleuze and the Anthropology of Time. *Anthropological Theory*, No. 8, pp. 399-429.
[86] Junichirō, Tanizaki ([1933] 2001). *In Praise of Shadows*. London: Vintage.
[87] Sakata Minoru (1988), unpaginated.

resulting from Sakata's proposal was later understood as an extension of and a support to the nationalist propaganda.[88] However, in the view of the photographs produced in close collaboration between different members of the clubs in Nagoya and Fukuoka, and in view of Yamanaka's support to the project, it becomes clear that the turn towards locality and traditional aesthetics was intended as a strategic move resulting from a complex situation in which Surrealist photography found itself in late 1939 within a silenced intellectual climate. If Sakata did explicitly aim not to celebrate but undermine 'nationalism', Yamamoto's leaving of the club for fear of further interrogation at the moment when the police had already put a ban on his own Surrealist magazine would be understandable. The fact that Sakata would explicitly use the word 'nationalism' for formulation of this project would rather only attest to its ambition.

A project promoting the 'artistic sensibility of indigenous Japanese culture' was developed in the years of the 'cultural renaissance' between 1932 and 1937, simultaneously to the process of 'conversion' (*tenkō*), or re-integration of the left-wing writers into a seemingly depoliticised intellectual climate.[89] How the primary aim of Sakata's project was not a support to this policy can also be established in the fact that no significant space was further allowed to the practice in the *Foto Taimusu* after the coordinated submissions in January 1940.[90] Yamanaka's writing in July, after two single submissions by Fukuoka photographers in the June and July issues, was a rare exception, and his construction of the argument through celebration of Japanese garden design should be understood as an attempt to explain the practice in acceptable terms. Similarly to Shimozato's previous project that required a change of

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[88] Almost every source that offers a study of Sakata's work in the decade includes this later Yamamoto's recollection. See for example: Tomohiro Nishimura (2008). *Nihon geijutsu shashinshi: ukiyoekara dejikame made* [History of Japanese Art Photography: from *Ukiyoe* to Digital Camera]. Kokubunji-shi: Bigaku Shuppan, pp. 288-290.

[89] Iida, Yumiko (2002). *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*. London, New York: Routledge, p. 36.

[90] Sakata partly bridged this situation by a series of articles published in the *Foto Taimusu* focusing on what he termed as 'important Japanese photographers', thus finding another means for publishing photographs produced by the Nagoya club. The series included a feature on Shimozato in January, Tajima in March and Yamamoto in July 1940. The only photographer Sakata chose from the domain of photojournalism was Watanabe (in June), a doyen of 'new' photography similarly to Horino whose object studies from his assignment on the continent were featured in the February issue alongside Abe's photographs.

terms under which it was allowed publication in 1940, Sakata would reformulate his intent later in the year through an interest in Japanese ethnicity. The reformulation would enable a publication titled *Photography in the Service of Plastic Culture, Characteristics of Plastic Photography* in 1941 that would include the same photographs produced in the initial phase of the project and again in collaboration with the other Nagoya photographers: Shimozato, Tajima and Inagaki.[91] Whereas Yamamoto has left the club in 1939, Shimozato also struggled to follow the latest shift. His 'Non-Figurative Imaging of External Objects', published by the *Foto Taimusu* in December 1939 and January 1940, attested to the difficulty and was his last writing on the subject of photography.[92] At the point of the January 1940 issue of the *Foto Taimusu*, in which the shift towards the traditional aesthetics reached its peak, all the photographs produced in the project did not manifest an enthusiastic view of 'Japanese-ness' or celebration of locality but rather showed abstract renditions of placeless, ruptured and ruined textures, and are seen as such in the later volume.[93] If such locality were produced with a photomural in mind, it would have been a truly radical means of communicating to the world how an oppressed citizenship of Japan perceived

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[91] Sakata Minoru ([1941] 2000). *Shashin no zōkeibunkahe no hōshi, Zōkei shashin no seikaku* [Photography in the Service of Plastic Culture, Characteristics of Plastic Photography]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 566-580.

[92] Shimozato Yoshio ([1939-1940] 2001). Gaizai suru hishatai ni tsurite hishōkeiteki zōei [Non-Figurative Imaging of External Objects]. In: Yamada Satoshi (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, renzu no avangyarudo* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 14: Ei Kyū, Shimozato Yoshio, Avant-Garde of the Lens]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 286-294. Shimozato accepts the term 'plasticity' in this text to reformulate his existing practice, as was also indicated in the commentary to the *Mesemb Genus*. He includes examples of the latest Sakata's and Hasegawa's photographs (*Sphere* and *Sliding Door*) to indicate how for him and Sakata the object is 'borrowed to create a different dimension' whereas Hasegawa captures the object objectively to explore its beauty and lyrical quality, as per: Ibid, p. 289. However, whereas Shimozato uses the article to publish new work developed alongside Sakata's exploration of object photography based on technical manipulation (seen in the January 1940 instalment) Sakata would by then already move on towards a different project.

[93] Takeba points to the same difference in iconography and stresses how Japanese traditional design was understood by these photographers as revealing Japanese aesthetics as intrinsically modernist, with the simplicity of Piet Mondrian's painting already considered a constitutive part of Japanese cultural heritage, as per: Takeba Jō (2006), p. 14.

itself in late 1939. On the other hand, if Sakata's change of heart was genuine and not strategic, it did not manifest itself as such before 1940.[94]

Disconnected lines

Given the range of difficulties presented to Surrealist photography in terms of intensified pressures for contributing to the war efforts and silencing of dissident or even critical thought, there were a number of significant publications that appeared in 1940. Both the *Mesemb Genus* and the *Light* albums, showing results of close collaborations among members of the clubs in Osaka and Nagoya, were published in that year, together with the *Irf 1*, the only volume of the Fukuoka club's magazine in April 1940. However, all of them signalled a reaching of dead ends, rather than an opening of new strands for development. There was no commentary on the *Light* in the press, and the state police monitored the Tampei Photography Club's meetings in Osaka.[95] The *Mesemb Genus* would be published after more than a year and only by denouncing Surrealism under a new concept of 'plasticity'. The very term 'plasticity' developed to embed the traditional aesthetics through collaboration between Nagoya and Fukuoka photographers, but the *Irf 1* signalled an end rather than a beginning of such activities. Individual projects published in that year would reflect on a muted and oppressive prevailing atmosphere in 1940.

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[94] The only time the *Foto Taimusu* reported on the participation of both Takiguchi and Sakata in the meetings discussing photography and the continent was in the March 1940 issue, with a possibility that such advocating of a photomural production on the part of Nagoya photographers was also supported by Takiguchi.

[95] For a suggestion of Hirai Terushichi's collaboration with the police see: Munro, Majella (2012). *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan 1925-1970*. Cambridge: Enzo Press, p. 193. Munro relies on a report of the collaboration by Kaneko Ryūichi, a guest curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, who claims the source of this report to be Hirai's family member, as confirmed in a conversation with the author at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography on February 22, 2013.

Figure 7.26: Abe Yoshifumi, *Pantomime*, 1940.

For instance, Abe's submission to the *Foto Taimusu* in September 1940 titled *Pantomime* (*Pantomaimu*) included six photographs with an invoked narration, reflecting on Gustav Flaubert's definition of the game within a short accompanying note (Figure 7.26).[96] Images seen in the feature - a window net, deserted baby card, a broken statue and a decomposing monument in woods - all portrayed a dark and oppressive dehumanised atmosphere. Only a silenced pantomime of the mute images would be allowed in the press at the time, and the feature was the last submission by a Surrealist photographer to the magazine before its merging with the other photographic publications in a joint photojournalistic outlet in December of the same year.[97] A series of Yamamoto's photographs produced after separating from the Nagoya club also reflected on the same silence, and resulted in some of the best-known Surrealist images produced in Japan.

[96] Abe Yoshifumi (1940). Pantomaimu [Pantomime]. *Foto Taimusu*, Vol. 17, No. 9, unpaginated.
[97] The following October issue announced the change by re-running an expanded feature 'Introducing Deutschland', with the same title and the same image of Adolf Hitler building a strong country already seen in the magazine in April 1938, as discussed in Chapter 2.

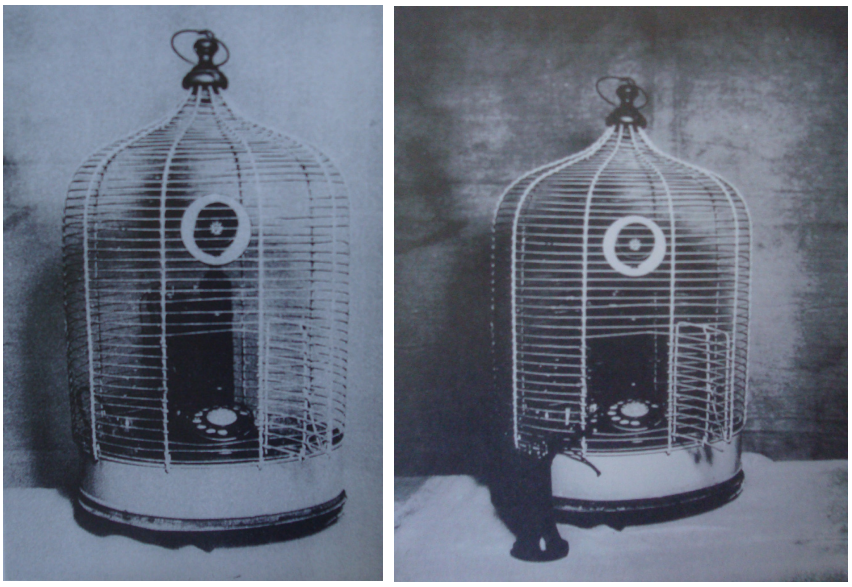

Figure 7.27: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Birdcage at a Buddhist Temple*, 1940.

Two of these photographs were published in the second volume of the *Kōkaku* (*Wide-Angle*) in August 1940. The magazine, published in two issues only, was an outlet of the Independent Photography Research Association (*Dokuritsu Shashin Kenkyūkai*) that Yamamoto belonged to previously and was a salon-style publication without a clear ideological focus. Titled *Birdcage at a Buddhist Temple* (*Garan no torikago*), they show a sequence of two images and were submitted together with a poem *Buddhist Legend* (*Garan no densetsu*) (Figure 7.27).[98] In the first, a telephone is placed within a bird's cage, whereas in the second the telephone receiver is seen outside of the cage.[99] As such, they were previously interpreted in the scholarship on Japanese Surrealist photography through the highly evocative symbolic potential of the birdcage motif and through its title that suggested a critique of the traditional cultural heritage.[100]

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[98] Yamamoto Kansuke ([1940] 2001). Garan no densetsu [Buddhist Legend]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 498-500.
[99] Notes to Ibid, p. 631.
[100] Maddox, Amanda (2013). Disobedient Spirit: Kansuke Yamamoto and his Engagement with Surrealism. In: Hamaya, Hiroshi and Kansuke, Yamamoto (et al.), *Japan's Modern Divide: the Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto* (Exh. Cat.). Los Angeles, California: J. Paul Getty Museum, pp. 200-201. See also: Munro, Majella (2012), pp. 153-154.

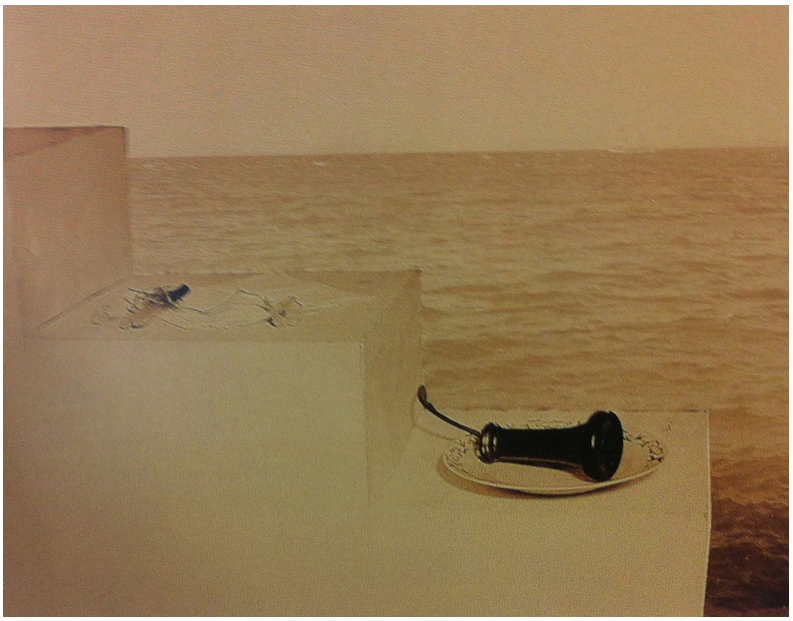

Figure 7.28: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Landscape*, 1940.

However, whereas the disconnected telephone receiver seen in those two photographs certainly suggests a critique of the silencing of critical thought, it should not be viewed in isolation from a discussion developing with regard to the subversive potential of the Surrealist object and the impact of Dalí's painting in Japan in the period from 1938 through to 1940. Yamamoto returned to the motif in the October 1940 issue of the *VOU* magazine, this time placing it upon a plate seen on a staircase in front of a sea in *Landscape* (*Fūkei*) (Figure 7.28). This image was accompanying an article 'Concise Vilification with Regard to Photography'.[101] Yamamoto describes photography in this text:

> When the camera shutter is pressed, all things within a chosen angle fly into a fixed mask. This is a scientific property of photography that cannot be helped. To have the ability of such a mechanism under

[101] Yamamoto Kansuke ([1940] 2001). Shashin ni tsuite kansetsuna zōgon [Concise Vilification with Regard to Photography]. In: Takeba Jō (ed.), *Korekushon Nihon shūrurearisumu 3: Shūrurearisumu no shashin to hihyō* [Collection of Surrealism in Japan 3: Surrealist Photography and Criticism]. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha, pp. 521-524. Although Yamamoto would publish poetry in the magazine of explicit Surrealist orientation since its establishment in 1935, his photographic submissions did not take place until 1939, when he became a member of the VOU Club (*VOU Kurabu*), an association behind the publication led by a Surrealist poet Kitasono Katsue, as per: Notes to Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2011). *Korekushon, Toshi modanizumu shishi 15, Vou kurabu to jūgonen sensō* [Collection: Poetry and Illustration of Urban Modernity, Volume 15: *Vou* Club and Fifteen Year War]. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, pp. 632-633.

> command and having to foretell its results is a nuisance on a journey towards photography's ultimate level of potential.[102]

To Yamamoto, therefore, the birdcage seen in the previously published images could equally stand for his view of photography, to which all things 'fly into' (*tobi komu*) once the camera shutter is pressed. For Yamamoto, however, photography was a heterogeneous medium that resisted a single interpretation, and its 'ultimate level of potential' was developed in pursuing a specific materiality in relation to objects photographed. He writes:

> The recent photography, and this is its course in the future, involves pursuing matter (*bushitsu*) alongside its search of object (*butai*). Photography's impoverished mechanical predisposition drives it into varied responses in this search for the matter, and this is where peculiarities of expression take shape. It does not allow establishing a singular characteristic; it cannot simply document or record.[103]

The 'search of object' is what qualifies the recent photography to Yamamoto, aimed at developing a new perception through the forging of 'new relations and combinations of objects' that 'symbolise the living content'.[104] In other words, the search for a specific materiality by forging new relations with objects that are symbolical in the domain of everyday life is Yamamoto's reflection on or contribution to the debate on the Surrealist object. The 'materiality' resonates with the view of photography as a 'plastic' art practice, the 'new relations and combinations' invoke Surrealist poetic juxtapositions whereas the 'living content' is evocative of the (politically engaged) work by his previous club co-members at the Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde. The specific choice of objects in the accompanying image is also reflective of such articulation of the debate, accentuated by the symbolical value invested into a disconnected telephone receiver.

The motif, symbolising negotiations between the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler in September 1938, was used by Dalí in a series

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[102] Yamamoto Kansuke ([1940] 2001), p. 521.
[103] Ibid, p. 522.
[104] Ibid, p. 523.

of paintings produced in 1938 and 1939, including *Mountain Lake* (1938), *The Sublime Moment* (1938) and *Enigma of Hitler* (1939).[105] On the occasion of Dalí's exhibition at the Julien Levy's gallery in New York in 1939, Takiguchi published three simultaneous articles in July 1939, making it difficult for anyone in the art and photography circles of the time not to be aware of his work. In 'Dali's Recent Activities' published in the *Mizue*, Takiguchi reported how twenty-one of Dalí's exhibited twenty-seven paintings were sold during the two weeks of the show, including *Sublime Moment*.[106] In this article, Takiguchi explained how the phone receiver motif is often repeated in Dalí's recent work and how *Sublime Moment* managed to capture a 'dangerous' moment of suspension in which the object appeared as if it was about to crash on a plate of fried eggs seen beneath, but did not comment on its political connotation.[107] In 'Two Portraits', published in the *Foto Taimusu*, Takiguchi extended his writing about Dalí's recent success in America, commenting on two profiles of the artist published in the *Harper's Bazaar* and *Life* magazines.[108] He explained how an image accompanying the *Harper's Bazaar* article and produced by George Hoyningen-Huene was a photomontage combining a portrait of Dalí and Gala with a reproduction of *Sublime Moment*, but again refrained from any further comment on the motif of a disconnected phone receiver. The political investment of Dalí's painting was only mentioned in the third article, published in the same month for the *Serupan* (*Serpent*) and titled 'Dalí Goes to America'.[109] In this text, Takiguchi speculated about how the latest move of the European artists to America might be purely economically motivated but insisted how it would, without

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[105] For a detailed discussion of *Enigma of Hitler* see: Greeley, Robin (2001). Dali's Fascism, Lacan's Paranoia. *Art History*, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 477.
[106] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1995). Dari no kinkyō [Dalí's Recent Activities]. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Ōoka Makoto (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Senzen, senchūhen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, pp. 133-137.
[107] Ibid, p. 134.
[108] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1995). Futatsu no pōtorēto [Two Portraits]. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Ōoka Makoto (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Senzen, senchūhen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, pp. 142-145.
[109] Takiguchi Shūzō ([1939] 1995). Amerika ni watatta Dari [Dalí Goes to America]. In: Takiguchi Shūzō, Ōoka Makoto (et al.), *Korekushon Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Senzen, senchūhen III: 1939-1944* [Collection Takiguchi Shūzō 13, Prewar and War Period 3, 1939-1944]. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, pp. 138-141.

doubt, have a significant impact on art history of the country.[110] He commented on *Enigma of Hitler* saying that Dalí's political standing changed after his move to the US and that it could not be compared to the more achieved works of the type, as in the example of George Grosz, adding how Dalí's political views would receive no understanding whatsoever from his New York audiences.[111]

The potential and meaning of the disconnected telephone receiver motif was therefore well known to Yamamoto prior to its inclusion in all three later photographs. As the last image from the series appeared in the issue of the magazine in which the editorial would also be required to proclaim their formal support to the war effort in an introductory note, it certainly criticised political oppression.[112] However, *Landscape* can also be read as symbolising the disconnection from any form of communication or action with and within the international Surrealist orbit. Although Takiguchi notes the emigration of European artists to the US he does not reflect on the fact that it would be led by an increasing fear of Fascism. His commentary on Dalí's political position vis-à-vis his emigration to the US, however, shows a clear knowledge of the tension between Dalí and Breton that resulted in the expelling of Dalí from the Surrealist group.[113] That the expulsion also resulted from Dalí's view of Fascist iconography as prone to irony should also be taken into account when thinking about a seemingly simple 'coupling' of photography with nationalism in the practice of Sakata, other Nagoya-based photographers and members of the *Société Irf*.[114] By the summer of 1939, the French Surrealist group was reduced to the smallest number of poets and artists in its, by then, fifteen year long history.[115] As Germany was invading country after country, little activity resulted from this reduced circle and Breton's long expected *Anthology of*

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[110] Ibid, p. 138.
[111] Ibid, p. 139.
[112] Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi (eds.) (2011), p. 766.
[113] See for example: Rothman, Roger (2012). *Tiny Surrealism*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, p. 205.
[114] For a detailed discussion about the incident in 1934 in which Dalí was accused for 'glorification of Hitlerian fascism' see: Ades, Dawn (1992). *Dalí*. New York: Thames and Hudson, pp. 106-107.
[115] Polizzotti, Mark (1995). *Revolution of the Mind: the Life of André Breton*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, p. 426.

Black Humour came out timely on June 10 in 1940, on the same day when the French government fled Paris.[116]

Unlike European Surrealists, many of whom emigrated from France prior to the onset of the Pacific War, the Japanese did not have the same choice.[117] Those Surrealist artists living in Paris, such as Ōkamoto Taro and Leonard Fujita, were brought back home and enlisted in the service of Japanese military operations, similarly to the most prominent Surrealist photographers, including Abe and Sakata.[118] Japanese Surrealists were prosecuted and arrested throughout 1941 in advance of the attacks on Pearl Harbour and the year thus marked an ending to the Surrealist photography production in the decade.[119] Striving both to distance Japan from the West as a source of modernism but also to affirm the country's imperial force, Japanese intellectuals would finally made an attempt to justify the expansion in the continent as aimed to create a unified Asian block. [120] In 1942, Kyoto University organised a symposium that was titled 'Overcoming Modernity' (*Kindai no chōkoku*), which aimed to prove that the war was both ethically and aesthetically justified, as it could redeem the failed experience of modernity and the ideal of Japanese and pan-Asian beauty.[121] The symposium attempted a 'critical rethinking' of modernity and called for reaffirming traditional Japanese cultural values.[122]

Throughout the 1930s, Surrealist photography found a means to negotiate its position as a minor historical force against all the existing categories of photography, including 'new', 'avant-garde', 'plastic' and art. In those

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[116] Ibid, p. 435.
[117] Including Breton, Masson, Ernst and Péret, as per: Ibid, pp. 436-446.
[118] Abe was sent to Philippines and Sakata to Java.
[119] Some Surrealist photographers kept their presence in different photographic magazines in 1941, as in the example of full-page close-up images of seashells by Hisano Hisashi featured in the July 1941 issue of the *Shashin Bunka* (*Photography Culture*). The same magazine, however, would also publish a six-page report on Hitler's advances in Europe.
[120] Goto-Jones, Christopher (2009). *Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, p. 81.
[121] Iida, Yumiko (2002), p. 26.
[122] For a detailed account of this symposium see: Harootunian, Harry D. (2000). *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp. 34-94. As Harootunian has shown, 'overcoming' primarily connoted 'overcoming dependence upon the modern West', as per: Ibid, p. 38. Harootunian has also shown how 'Americanisation' was considered as the chief source of the problem in terms of capitalist modernisation of the country in the twentieth century, as per: Ibid, pp. 47-65.

examples that remained embedded in the straight shot and in the attempt of Kansai photographers to reclaim the space of locality in 1939 and 1940, it was also closely related to the predominant photojournalism. These established categories have served as constants against which the (major) history of Japanese photography has thus far been narrated.[123] A complex relationship between the major and minor historical forces is contained in that the first is defined by the power of constants whereas the second is distinguished by the power of variation.[124] A minor history is related to all such categorising points, as it 'impacts and passes by each categorical point, each acknowledged grouping'.[125] By such positioning, a minor history does not follow a straight line, from 'new' photography at the beginning of the decade through to 'plastic' photography, for example, but runs 'between the lines' in its relationship to 'avant-garde' or on thin lines of differentiation with regard to photojournalism. The irregular movement is its only means to exercise the power of diversification against all of them respectively, intensifying them in the process and constantly repositioning itself so as to remain operative in the field of visual culture. In preparations for the onset of the Pacific War, however, all the lines through which it could further reinvent itself were cut off. The potential of affirming its power for inducing new modes of thinking about and practising photography thus lies in acknowledging it fully in the present knowledge.

[123] For how a major history is established according to such 'constants' see: Wayne Joseph, Branden (2008). *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage: a 'Minor' History*. New York: Zone Books, p. 50.
[124] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix ([1980] 1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 101.
[125] Wayne Joseph, Branden (2008), p. 51.

Conclusion

The relationship between Surrealism and photography in 1930s Japan has been discussed in this thesis in terms of the concept of minor literature as a means of recognising its importance as a practice aimed at the quintessential Surrealist goal - to liberate and revolutionise the mind. The systematic suppression of the freedom of thought that prevailed in the political climate in Japan from the mid 1920s forms the background against which Surrealist photography would emerge and develop throughout the decade. Taking into consideration such a background, the number of practitioners and photographs produced as well as the intensity of the critical engagement with the production of Surrealist photography in themselves could testify how highly urgent the need for a free thought had been in the country at the time. It is not the statistics, however, that should be accounted for when reflecting on the practice of Surrealist photography in the decade, but the relevance of the methodological and theoretical legacy that it passed on to the histories of Japanese photography and art in the decades after the Second World War.

Based on a previously little-known material, this thesis primarily reveals in which way and to what extent an idiosyncratic form of Surrealist photography, developed in a dispersed network of individual artists, amateur photo clubs and various art organisations, communicated the Surrealist ideas, knowledge, practices and methods. As such, it argues for recognition of Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s in the history of Surrealism. A related concern that emerges from this research, however, becomes the relevance of this recognition for the history of Japanese art of the twentieth century. In conclusion, this thesis thus firstly reflects on its findings but also offers a partial reconfiguration of its subject matter in the historical conditions of the 1950s in order to open the field of study to further research.

Reflections

Emerging in a decade of intense militarist campaigning and uprooted from a coherent Surrealist group, the existence of Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s appears impossible. Understanding how one conditioned the other, or how no single and openly active Surrealist group would be allowed in Japan under the Public Peace Maintenance Law in the 1930s, it becomes clear that such an impossibility should be considered as 'no longer or not yet possible to think', as a consequence of a historical constraint on thought.[1] However, as the 'impossibility of action' is mirrored with the 'impossibility of passivity' in a minor formation, it preconditions its founding characteristics.[2] In other words, the notion of minor literature becomes a necessary tool to address such a historical condition of Surrealist photography in Japan during the decade, as it is precisely its impossibility that also defines the minor.[3] This methodological tool thus affirms a specific historical position of this practice as firmly situated in Surrealism's international, collective and politically engaged character.

The fact that Surrealist photography operated outside of a coherent Surrealist group in Japan during the 1930s was firstly discussed in terms of the notion of deterritorialisation as the first principle of minor literature. This notion allowed establishing how it not only existed in a deterritorialised character of the international Surrealist orbit but also in the reterritorialised condition of the Japanese urban modernity. In the Japanese urban culture of the decade, the same cultural practices that were 'recoded' as 'modern' became a space of contestation between the ability of free expression and action against a concrete war machinery. Hence, this photographic practice consequentially reterritorialised into the space of amateur photo clubs and into the domain of the illustrated press. Although formally functioning as amateur photo clubs, these decentred and open meeting points for varied practitioners including

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[1] Rajchman, John (1988). Foucault's Art of Seeing. *October*, Vol. 44, p. 117.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Thoburn, Nicholas (2003). *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. London; New York: Routledge, p. 19.

photographers, painters, and critics enabled a continuous practice of the Surrealist visual thought throughout the decade. They offered a possibility for a continued research, collaboration and experimentation as well as a route through which the Surrealist texts, concepts and ideas maintained their presence in the country. The photographic magazines, on the other hand, offered a further possibility to activate the reterritorialised character of Surrealist photography as a means of deterritorialisation, diversifying and reconfiguring the space of the illustrated press as one of the cornerstones of the visual culture of its time. As John Rajchman has observed, visual thought is always rooted in a specific 'material existence' or the spaces in which it is exercised.[4] The 'material existence' of Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s was thus bound to the reterritorialised forms of its operation, or the amateur photo clubs and photo magazines. As the same 'material existence' was necessarily shared with all the other practices of photography throughout the decade, it complicated its impossible position in the zones of indiscernibility.

The collective character of such a reterritorialised practice was afterwards established through the operational characteristics of an assemblage as the second defining characteristic of minor literature. The question of collectivity, assigned to minor literature by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari according to the very condition of its marginalised character, brings forward the position of liminality as a space that necessitates communion.[5] Surrealist photographers in Japan of the decade worked in close collaborations among each other, organising collective shooting sessions, devising inter-textual systems of referencing, engaging in discussions and producing multimedia projects with poets and painters. However, the concept of a collective assemblage allowed to engage the individual artists that did not belong to the amateur photo clubs in this informal and alternative network, and take into account the examples in which photographers would collaborate with other artists on production of

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[4] Rajchman, John (1988), p. 92

[5] For how the 'cramped space' of minor literature 'forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics' see: Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix ([1975] 1986). *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 17.

Surrealist visual material. A number of different art collectives in the country embraced photography as a form of artistic expression even before its official integration into the national exhibitions and Surrealism offered the means of this cross-pollination. Thus the concept of a collective assemblage enabled recognition of the collaborative character of the varied amateur photo clubs and their strong links with each other, as well as the existence of an equally dispersed but also closely related network of those Japanese Surrealist artists who would practice photography on equal terms as any other art form. In its delimiting scope and a specific focus, this thesis only discusses a small number of the examples in which the collaborative projects would take place in the decade. As much as it argues for a multiple collaborative character of Surrealist photography on several accounts, the full implications of its assemblage can only be observed in the process of integration with other forms of Surrealist activity in the country. This thesis did not set out to perform such a task, as it recognised how the first necessary step was to acknowledge fully the scope and the variety of the specific case studies, which could thus facilitate further engagement in the field.

Affirming the interconnectedness of disparate practices in this thesis establishes the grounds to also affirm the level of political engagement among Surrealist photographers in Japan during the 1930s as the third qualifying characteristic of minor literature. Although political agency would be immanent to their minoritarian condition, Surrealist photographers of the decade actively sought means to awaken an independent and revolutionary subjectivity in their viewership by producing visual material that was critical of the prevailing policy of the ‘national body’ both in its spatial and temporal terms. They experimented with the Surrealist object strategy in directed photographs and performances staged for the camera, as well as in the production of collages and landscapes, so as to find means by which they could impact and change reality in the domain of visual culture. They also experimented with how the transgressive character of sexuality and fantasy could mediate such an impact through the technological means of photography. They theorised a form of ‘Neo-Surrealism’ that would unite varied Japanese artists of a younger generation in their specific use of abstraction. The use of abstraction was

perceived within the Surrealist interest in objectification of thought and rooted in concerns of the Parisian group but was also applied as a means of communicating the censored visual material. In the final years leading up to the Pacific War, the desire for a politically effective action was even pushed to the level of making an attempt to reclaim the space of locality from its use in the nationalist propaganda and to reinforce a modernist view of the country that was being consumed in the mythologised logic of the approaching 'total war'. In the cramped space of its historical impossibility, this type of practice necessarily maintained a flexible position, as a process that required constant renegotiations with the very conditions that contextualised it as impossible in the first place.[6] As such a relation with the 'major' forces that conditioned this practice required a precise defining of the political engagement, this thesis has paid close attention to the specific articulation of the 'political' within Surrealism of the 1930s and especially in the later part of the decade.

The concept of minor literature thus performed the role of reinvesting in the relationship between Surrealism, photography and 1930s Japan the fundamental characteristics of Surrealism's existence around the globe, as a collective and politically engaged movement that aimed to liberate and revolutionise the mind, and thus change the lived reality. The notion, however, also offers the opportunity to pursue another question that was posed at the beginning of this thesis, which is the relevance of this practice for the histories of Japanese photography and art. As a process that envisages a 'people to come', the minor status of Japanese Surrealist photography also enables an attempt to establish the links between the prewar Surrealist photography and the postwar avant-garde art in Japan and thus open up the possibilities for further research.

[6] For how the minor is a process of 'forming relations with these conditions that deterritorialize them' see: Thoburn, Nicholas (2003), p. 22.

Reconfigurations

The impossibility of isolating Japanese postwar art from a lineage of the historical avant-gardes established in the country since the turn of the twentieth century has been noted by a number of authors.[7] As Tezuka Miwako has recently argued, Takiguchi Shūzō acted as one such 'bridge' between prewar and postwar modernism.[8] As Tezuka has pointed out, regardless of the fact that peace and freedom were the most important concepts of the new Japanese constitution, proclaimed during the period of US occupation in 1947, revived interest in the historical avant-gardes in the early postwar period was, ironically, again subject to surveillance.[9] In a 'reverse course' of the postwar reformation, Japan became a strategic point for the Western Bloc in the Cold War and thus the occupying forces compromised the grounding principles of liberal democracy and 'set out to prevent leftist thought from spreading in Japan'.[10] Whereas the alliance with the US in the Korean War (1950-1953) brought Japan economic recovery and prosperity, the 1950s were also marked by intellectual pessimism and 'passive nihilism'.[11]

The *Experimental Workshop* (*Jikken Kōbō*) was the most advanced art collective that emerged against such a backdrop, forming in 1951 and growing to incorporate fourteen permanent members by 1953. The collective was active until approximately 1957, constantly exploring the possibilities of multimedia and collaboration. In the eighteen projects presented to the public during the time, this was accomplished through a constant engagement of different sets of individuals in production of varied works, including dance

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[7] For how 'Surrealism and its lasting impact on Japanese postwar art are of particular importance' see: Hayashi, Michio (2012). Tracing the Graphic in Postwar Japanese Art. In: Chong, Doryun (et al.), *Tokyo 1955-1970* (Exh. Cat.). New York: Museum of Modern Art, p. 113.
[8] Tezuka, Miwako (2013). Jikken Kōbō and Takiguchi Shūzō: The New Deal Collectivism of 1950s Japan. *positions: east asia cultures critique*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 354. See also: Tezuka, Miwako (2005). *Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop): Avant-Garde Experiments in Japanese Art of the 1950s*. PhD thesis, Columbia University, p. 32.
[9] Tezuka, Miwako (2013), pp. 355-356.
[10] Ibid, p. 356.
[11] Ibid, p. 357.

performances, theatre plays, music concerts, and films, and through an abandonment of the traditional exhibition format for a more open system of presentations. Tezuka's scholarship on the *Experimental Workshop* has shown how under the impact of Takiguchi, who godfathered its name and acted as a source of knowledge about the prewar avant-gardes, it re-appropriated the legacy of Bauhaus, a subject of Takiguchi's interest in the 1930s.[12] The very title of the collective's name, coined by Takiguchi, established a connection with the earlier Photo Experiment Group, a name in English that the Avant-Garde Photography Association adopted in 1939.[13] Within the *Experimental Workshop*, the link to the 1930s Surrealist photography is thus directly and immediately established by Takiguchi's presence. However, another less acknowledged relation can be observed in the practice of the group's chief photographer Ōtsuji Kiyoji, whose interest in the 1930s Surrealist photography resulted from his exposure to the *Foto Taimusu* and collaboration with Abe Yoshifumi, who assumed the name of Abe Nobuya in the postwar period.

Ōtsuji developed an interest in Japanese photography of the late 1930s while he was a high school student, acquiring volumes of the *Foto Taimusu* in a second hand bookshop.[14] The meaning of the photographic avant-garde was thus mediated to him directly through the discussions publicised in the magazine, largely featuring different contextualisations of Surrealist photography, and served as a model of his own exploration of the medium. In the immediate aftermath of the war, he was to advance this interest as a member of the photography section of the Art Culture Association from 1949 to 1952. The group continued its focus on Surrealist and abstract art as at the point when it was first formed in 1939 and offered Ōtsuji a platform for further

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[12] For how *Jikken Kōbō* inherited Takiguchi's utopianism and was 'a continuation of active engagement with and the expansion of the Bauhausian, and ultimately Moholy-Nagy's, theory of unified art (*sōgō zõkei*)' see: Ibid, p. 359.
[13] The second part of the name *Experimental Workshop* could also be reassessed against the title of the well-known Japan Workshop agency and the currency of the word 'workshop' (*kōbō*) in the 1930s.
[14] Ōtsuji Kiyoji (1989). *Shashin nōto* [*Note of Photography*]. Bijutsu shuppansha, pp. 142-147.

experiments in the domains of abstraction and the Surrealist object.[15] He was introduced to the group by Saito Yoshishige, an abstract painter and sculptor active in prewar Japanese avant-garde as one of the founders of the Room Nine Society, with whom Ōtsuji shared a studio space for over two years. Through the activities of the group Ōtusji also met Abe, who helped him understand a difference between the view of avant-garde as a style, a subject of much criticism at the time, and as a diverse and diversifying practice offering means for constructing unorthodox and fresh views of the world.

Figure C.1: Abe Nobuya, Ōtsuji Kiyoji, *Object*, 1950.

Following the encounter, Ōtsuji and Abe produced a collaborative work in 1950, which was published in magazines and exhibited at group shows in the following years. A photograph resulting from this project and titled *Object* (*Obuje*) shows a combined use of eroticism and abstraction in an image constructed from varied superimposed layers (Figure C.1). Unlike much contemporary photography that was preoccupied with socially engaged

[15] For biographical details of the photographer see: Ōtsuji Kiyoji (et al.) (2007). *Ōtsuji Kiyoji no shashin, deai to koraboreishon* [Ōtsuji Kiyoji's Photography: Encounters and Collaborations]. Tokyo: Firumu Atosha, pp. 1-55.

realism, the project constructed a suggestive image space, offering varied points of entrance and inviting multiple perspectives. Both the title and the formal characteristics of the image reflected Abe's prewar interests but also continued the entire tradition of Surrealist photography established in the 1930s. An in-depth and first hand knowledge and fascination with the prewar Surrealist photography and close collaborations with prewar Surrealists such as Saito and Abe thus preceded Ōtsuji's inclusion in the *Experimental Worshop*, which did not take place until 1953, just prior to the fifth presentation of the group. In January of that year, the editor of the *Asahi Gurafu* (*Asahi Graph*) Tadasu Iizawa started publishing photographs of sculptural objects produced by the members of the group, Kitadai Shōzō, Yamamguchi Katsuhiro, Yoshihige Saito and Tetsuro Komai (among others) in the 'Asahi Photo News' column, on Takiguchi's recommendation. The photographs were mostly taken by Ōtsuji and the collaboration resulted in his joining the group, again on Takiguchi's recommendation. Takiguchi would thus not be the sole source of knowledge about the prewar Surrealist photography for Ōtsuji, but the final and the most decisive link with the group after his initial work with Yoshishige and Abe.[16]

The collaborative project for the 'APN' column was considered a radical experimentation in multimedia art production at the time. As photographs were both records of the produced objects and the medium for which they were constructed, the event of photographing was considered an intrinsic part of the artistic experiment, leading to recognition of photography as a significant medium for the group, consisting at that moment mostly of painters and music composers, together with stage designers (lighting design and engineering) and poets. For Yamaguchi, a founding member of the collective together with Kitadai and Takiguchi, it meant 'the addition of Constructivist photography and Surrealist fantasy to the workshop's productive arsenal',

[16] For how another link between the prewar Avant-Garde Art Association and Ōtsuji would be a collaboration with the club's former member and a close associate of Imai Shigeru, designer Mori Takayuki, within another postwar art collective *Gurafikku Shūdan* see: Mitsuda Yuri (2009). Shōwa zenki no bijutsukai to shashin sakuhin [Art World and Photographic Works in the Early Part of Shōwa]. In: *Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūjo* [Tokyo Research Institute for Cultural Assets] (ed.), *Shōwaki bijutsu tenrankai no kenkyū: Senzenhen* [Research into Art Exhibitions in Shōwa Era, Prewar Pdition]. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, p. 386.

integrating Ōtsuji's interest in Surrealist photography of the 1930s.[17] The series of photographs in the 'APN' column had a significant impact on the group's fifth event and led to the inclusion of photography in the presentation, together with abstract oil painting and experimentations with new materials and movement.

Figure C.2: Hisano Hisashi, *Shop Window of the Sea*, 1938.

Figure C.3: Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, Ōtsuji Kiyoji, 'APN', 1953.

Production of the feature involved numerous individual artists from outside of the group throughout fifty-five different issues published between 1953 and 1954 and also included those prewar avant-garde artists who experimented with photography in the 1930s, such as Hasegawa Saburō and Hamada Hamao.[18] Incorporating theirs and Ōtsuji's interest in the prewar Surrealist photography, the feature reflected a number of methodological similarities in its specific interest in the relationship between the Surrealist object and photography. Juxtaposing *Shop Window of the Sea* (*Umi no shōuindō*, 1938), a photograph by the *Société Irf* member Hisano Hisashi, with an 'APN' feature produced by Yamaguchi and Ōtsuji in November 1953 reveals the same

[17] Yamaguchi, Katsuhiro (1991). Experimental Workshop and the Deterritorialization of Art. In: Satani Garō (ed.), *Omāju Takiguchi Shūzō ten 11: Jikken Kōbō to Takiguchi Shūzō = Experimental Workshop* [Homage Exhibition to Takiguchi Shūzō 11: *Jikken Kōbō* and Takiguchi Shūzō = Experimental Workshop] (Exh.Cat.). Tokyo: Misuzo Shobō, p. 26.
[18] Mizusawa, Tsutomu (2013). Experimental Workshop: A Seeding and a Sign. In: *Jikken Kōbō: Sengo geijutsu wo kirihiraku* [Experimental Workshop: Opening Up Postwar Art] (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Yomiuri shimbunsha, p. 314

interest in the construction of elaborate sculptural scenes exclusively for the camera (Figure C.2, Figure C.3). Equally important, the use of the popular illustrated press for dissemination of such images was also their shared characteristic. Whereas *Shop Window* was published on the cover page of the *Asahi Kamera* in December 1938, 'APN' features would be integrated within the magazine's commercial content and would often only take up a part of a single page. As Mizusawa Tsutomu has recently asserted, the relation with the illustrated press was of the key importance to the project, as the artists directed the scenes for the camera conceiving the 'magazine page much like a stage space'.[19] Thus it was not only the mediation of the Surrealist object and the renegotiation of its meaning through collaborative art process characteristic of the 1930s Surrealist photography that would continue in the 1950s, but also its active relationship with the illustrated press. The very character of prewar amateur photo-clubs, as the spaces of research and collaboration, also translated in the work of the *Experimental Workshop*, as Misuzawa described the group to have been a 'collection of amateurs' from its inception, formed outside of the formal art education.[20]

Takiguchi's active presence on the postwar Japanese art scene received the highest recognitions. In 1958, Takiguchi travelled to Europe for the first time as a commissioner of the Japanese pavilion at the Venice Biennale and, as he later recounted, finally found his way to the apartment on rue Fontaine to meet André Breton.[21] Takiguchi's curatorial achievements in the decade were channelled through a Tokyo-based Takemiya Gallery that commissioned him to recommend new and unknown talent, offering them exhibition space for the period of ten days since 1951.[22] During the following six years, in which around 200 individuals had solo exhibitions in this space, some of Takiguchi's recommended artists reflected his Surrealist background, and one of them was Okanoue Toshiko. A fashion designer still in her twenties, Okanoue

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., p. 312.
[21] Iwaya, Kunio (1993). Shuzo Takiguchi and André Breton. In: *André Bretaon and Shuzo Takiguchi: the 13th Exhibition Homage to Shuzo Takiguchi* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Satani Garō, p. 45.
[22] Havens, Thomas R.H. (2006). *Radicals and Realists in the Japanese Nonverbal Arts*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 51.

experimented with producing fantastical collages from foreign fashion magazines without much knowledge of Surrealism. After meeting Takiguchi in 1952 and after he introduced her to the work of Marx Ernst, Okanoue had two solo exhibitions at the Takemiya Gallery, in 1952 and 1956.[23] Rediscovered in the 1990s, her work attests to an interest primarily in representation of identity and evokes strongly Ei-Kyū's collages produced during the 1930s.

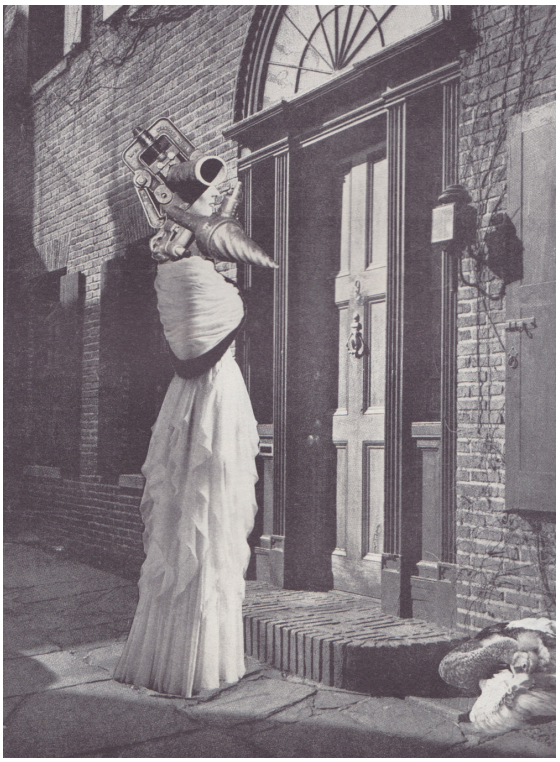

Figure C.4: Okanoue Toshiko, *Noblewoman*, 1954.

For example, Okanoue's *Noblewoman* features the same refiguring of the relationship between the face, the head and the body, a characteristic that reappears in much of her work (Figure C.4). The image shows a female figure in a white evening dress whose head is substituted with a composition of metal objects and includes an image of a bird in the bottom right, possibly in reference to Ernst's work. In the case of Ei-Kyū's collages produced in the late 1930s, the interest would communicate a commentary against the concept of the 'national body'. In the 1950s, the body resumed its critical role, as a site of tension and anxiety, and in Okanoue's case would reflect on the

[23] Kobayashi, Mika (2008). Toshiko Okanoue: Between the Layers of Dreams. *FOAM*, No. 15, pp. 108-110.

'Americanisation' of Japanese culture and the overflowing of daily life with the rapidly intensifying processes of capitalism.

Ei-Kyū also resumed his activates during the 1950s in the Democrat Artists Association (*Demokurāto Bijutsuka Kyōkai*), a collective he established in 1951. The artists taking part in the Democrat would sometimes also exhibit at the Takemiya Gallery, which was established as a creative hub for experimental art forms during the time of Takiguchi's curatorship. It hosted solo exhibitions for some of the best-known Japanese artists of the twentieth century: Kawara On in 1954 and Kusama Yayoi in 1955. Taking photographs of these artists' works was the first professional assignment of Hosoe Eikō, one of the most prominent Japanese photographers, and co-member with Kawara at the Democrat in the early 1950s.[24] Hosoe's best-known projects in the 1960s, including the photobooks *Man and Woman* (*Otoko to onna*, 1961), *Ordeal of Roses* (*Barakei*, 1963) and *Kamaitachi* (1968) all focused on delivery of unorthodox and challenging representations of the body and were developed through collaborations with a writer Mishima Yukio and a dancer Hijikata Tatsumi. An important link to literary Surrealism in this informal group can be identified in Mishima's and Hijikata's friendship with a writer Shibusawa Tatsuhiko.[25] Shibusawa was the first translator of Marquis de Sade's *L'Historie de Juliette, ou les Prospérités du vice* (1797-1801), which was published in Japanese in 1959 as *The Glory of Vice* (*Akutoku no sakaei)*. The following 'Sade trial' lasted for a decade and both Shibusawa and the publisher were prosecuted for public obscenity. [26] Thus it becomes apparent how even well into the 1960s, Japanese censorship would still not tolerate translations of radical literature, which would nevertheless be already embedded in the practice.

On the other hand, the legacy of photo-realist photography inherited from the prewar photojournalism also continued in the postwar period and was again

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[24] Hosoe Eikō, as per an interview with the author on October 5, 2011.
[25] For how Shibusawa was 'a friend of Mishima Yukio and an advocate for the work of the avant-garde Butho dancer Hijikata Tatsumi' see: Rimer, J. Thomas and Gessel, Van C. (eds.) (2007). *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature from 1945 to Present*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, p. 659.
[26] Miller, Scott J. (2009). *Historical Dictionary of Modern Japanese Literature and Theatre*, Lanham, Ld.: Scarecrow Press, p. 111.

established as a dominant practice in Japan in the immediate aftermath of the country's defeat in the Second World War. It would be the same photojournalist photographers from the 1930s that continued this legacy, most notably Domon Ken. The realist approach to photography in the immediate post-war period in Japan is considered a natural consequence of the shock imposed on the eye by the overpowering horror of the nuclear destruction.[27] It is considered to have dominated throughout the 1950s and thus such experimental projects developing from formal and informal relationships to Surrealism in the same decade again assumed a position of a minority.[28] Deterritorialised and assembled in an alternative network, however, Surrealist photography passed on its interest in liberating the mind and changing the world, although equally remaining 'out of sight'.

Surreal presence of Surrealism

As William Marotti's recent study in the avant-garde art of 1960s Japan has shown, the rise of radical practices in the decade, entangled with the continuous demonstrations against the renewal of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the US (known as *Anpo* protests), was largely indebted to the theoretical sophistication of prewar Surrealists, such as Kaidō Hideo.[29] A collaborator of Takiguchi's in Surrealist research groups during the 1930s, Kaidō was among the chief initiators of the *Yomiuri Indépendant*, a major annual exhibition running from 1949 that offered a platform for the rise of independent and alternative art. As Marotti has stressed, a generation of new Surrealist scholars were equally focused on translations of French literature as well as on the research of Japan's own

[27] Holborn, Mark and Hosoe, Eikoh (1999). *Eikoh Hosoe*. New York: Aperture Foundation, p. 1.
[28] For a claim how 'an archive of the avant-garde or an avant-garde archive' would not exist in Japanese photography prior to 1961 see: Merewether, Charles (2006). A Language to Come: Japanese Photography After the Event. In: Merewether, Charles (ed.), *The Archive, Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: Whitechapel, p. 124.
[29] Marotti, Willliam A. (2013). *Money, Trains and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 127

literary Surrealism during the 1930s.[30] Tone Yasunao, a still performing avant-garde music artist, for example, developed a thesis on Japanese literary Surrealism in the 1950s, interviewing the leading poets such as Takiguchi and Kitasono Katsue. In his recollection, Takiguchi expressed a view during these interviews about how before the war one of the chief preoccupations of the Japanese Surrealist was to 'be as faithful as possible to Breton's doctrine', but admitted that this might have been a mistake.[31] According to Marotti, untranslated texts by Georges Bataille would be widely read and considered canonical, as much as those by Comte de Lautréamont.[32] The question of Surrealism's potency to deliver a revolutionary art practice was considered essential in the 1950s, as a possibility of a politically engaged 'action' against what was perceived as the depoliticised character of Surrealist fantastical painting was of crucial interest to the young generation of artists.[33] As a Surrealist illustrator Ikeda Tatsuo reported, the issue of 'art revolution' versus 'revolutionary art', with regard to Surrealism, was a subject of considerable discussion at various research groups in the decade.[34]

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[30] Marotti, Willliam A. (2013), p. 179.
[31] Ibid, p. 180.
[32] Ibid, p. 161.
[33] Isozaki Arata (2013). Han kaisō: 'Ore wa hyōronka janakute hihyōka nanda' to itta Tōno Yoshiaki no koto wo omoidashite mita [Anti-Recollection: Trying to Recall Tōno Yoshiaki, Who Said: 'I am Not a Commentator, I am a Critic']. In: Tōno Yoshiaki, Matsui Shigeru, Imura Yasuko (eds.), *Kyōzo no jidai: Tōno Yoshiaki bijutsu hihyōsen* [*Art Critics by Yoshiaki Tono*]. Tokyo: Kawadeshobōshinsha, p. 308.
[34] For how the same research groups also included Okamoto Tarō and Yamaguchi Katsuhiro see: Ikeda Tatsuo (1970). Watashi ni totte shuruearisumu to wa nanika, Sono shiteku na, soshite, shishiteki na hōkoku [The way I see Surrealism, a Private and Personally Historical Report]. *Bijutsu Techō*, No. 336, p. 161.

Figure C.5: Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Hi Red Center, Sixth Mixer Plan, 1963.

Although the versatile and multimedia character of the Japanese avant-garde in the 1960s cannot be subsumed within the singularity of any specific historical avant-garde movement, Surrealism clearly played a significant part in laying its grounds in the 1950s, in a direct continuation of its activities from the 1930s. Thus when Nakanishi Natsuyuki, a member of a radical performance group the Hi Red Center, which emerged from the platform set up by the *Yomiuri Indépendant*, took to the streets of Tokyo in the group's Sixth Mixer Plan in 1963 wearing an elaborate constructed mask over his head, he would evoke a long existing avant-garde tradition in the country (Figure C.5). He would not only integrate with the streets of Tokyo the knowledge of Salvador Dalí's performance with Sheila Legge in 1936 but also Tamotsu Terada's series of photographs seen in the *Light*, as well as Ei-Kyū's and Okanoue's collages, all equally concerned with the issues of identity and political activism. And, of course, the camera would be there to record it.

Opening an introductory text in the special volume dedicated to Surrealism in the December 1970 issue of the leading Japanese art magazine *Bijutsu*

Techō, Iwaya Kunio, who had just translated Patrick Waldeberg's *Surrealism* (1962) at that point, quoted a comment made by Maurice Blanchot in 'Reflections on Surrealism' (1945): 'No one belongs to this movement any more, and everyone feels he could have been part of it'.[35] For Blanchot, as well as for Iwaya, Surrealism became ubiquitous and metamorphosed into becoming surreal. Whereas both authors were writing with the situation in France in mind, the condition also reflected strongly the situation in Japanese postwar art. In other words, the lineage of Surrealist art practice remains embedded in much of the postwar avant-garde art in the country, extending beyond but also including the medium of photography. Regardless of a new generation of Surrealist critics who emerged after the war, such as Shibusawa or Iwaya, and regardless of the continued practice of Surrealist photography among the artists of the younger generation, such as Ōtsuji, the ubiquitous condition of Surrealism's presence in Japan remains until the present day. Whereas this thesis brings to critical attention the scope and prevailing subjects of interest in Surrealist photography in Japan during the 1930s, it also aspires to bring to the fore its significance for an adequate understanding of the Japanese history of art in the twentieth century. As a number of relevant links and interconnected points of interest can be established between Surrealist photography of the 1930s and postwar performance art, film and intermedia or even in the domain of sculpture and graphic design, this thesis invites further research in the associated fields and hopes to facilitate future contributions to the area of its study.

[35] Iwaya Kunio (1970). Shururerisumu no kyō, sono 'kakuri' to 'inpei' ni tsuite [Today of Surrealism, and its 'Isolation' and 'Concealment']. *Bijutsu Techō*, No. 336, p. 49. See also: Blanchot, Maurice (1945). Reflections on Surrealism. In: Blanchot, Maurice (1995). *The Work of Fire*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, p. 85.

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Source: Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.) (2001). *Yamamoto Kansuke: Conveyor of the Impossible* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo Station.

Figure 7.28: Yamamoto Kansuke, *Landscape*, 1940.

Source: Yamamoto, Kansuke (et al.) (2001). *Yamamoto Kansuke: Conveyor of the Impossible* (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Tokyo Station.

Conclusion

Figure C.1: Abe Nobuya, Ōtsuji Kiyoji, *Object*, 1950.

Source: Ōtsuji Kiyoji (et al.) (2007). *Ōtsuji Kiyoji no shashin, deai to koraboreishon* [Ōtsuji Kiyoji’s Photography: Encounters and Collaborations]. Tokyo: Firumu Atosha.

Figure C.2*:* Hisano Hisashi*, Shop Window of the Sea,* 1938*.*

Source: Ishii Ayako (et al.) (1999). *Nihon no shashinka 15: Koishi Kiyoshi to zen’ei shashin* [Complete Collection of Japanese Photographers 15: Koishi Kiyoshi and Avant-Garde Photography]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Figure C.3*:* Yamaguchi Katsuhiro*,* Ōtsuji Kiyoji*, ‘*APN*’,* 1953*.*

Source: *Jikken Kōbō: Sengo geijutsu wo kirihiraku* [Experimental Workshop: Opening Up Postwar Art] (2013) (Exh. Cat.). Tokyo: Yomiuri shimbunsha.

Figure C.4: Okanoue Toshiko, *Noblewoman*, 1954.

Source: *FOAM* (2008), No. 15.

Figure C.5: Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Hi Red Center, Sixth Mixer Plan, 1963.

Source: Chong, Doryun (et al.) (2012). *Tokyo 1955-1970* (Exh. Cat.). New York: Museum of Modern Art.

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